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The role of theophany in the portrayal of the Incarnation in Mark and John

The Role of Theophany in the Portrayal of the Incarnation in Mark and John

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Abstract

Justin Martyr is often credited as being the first to identify the theophanies of the Old Testament with Christ. There is evidence, however, that this view is present within the Gospels.

In demonstrating this, consideration is given to the nature of Textual Communities and their methods of interpretation within the late Second Temple period. The manner in which theophany is portrayed within the Old Testament is then investigated, along with the hope for the return of the LORD to Zion. Consideration is given to the manner in which the LORD was seen to be 'present' within the period. This provides the narratives with which the nascent Christian communities interact in their portrayal of Christ.

Before the Gospels themselves are considered, the objection that God would not be imagined to appear in human form is met by means of an investigation of the literature of the time.

Mark and John are then considered. In the former, it is seen that Christ plays the role of the long hoped for returning LORD. At stages along this journey of return, he is portrayed in the manner of Old Testament theophanies. The Gospel of John portrays Christ differently. Within the Prologue, he is seen as the 'enfleshed' embodiment of the means of presence of God which have been earlier surveyed. Within the remainder of the Gospel Christ is then identified with various theophanic figures, not least the little discussed Voice of God.

The notion of Christ as an 'enfleshed' theophany has implications for New Testament research in other areas, not least the Pauline literature. The identification of the Voice of God is also a contribution to this field, and the relationship of the Gospel communities to 'the scriptures' will assist in considerations of the 'partings of the ways' between Jew and Christian.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my two supervisors, Rev'd Dr Ernest Lucas and Rev'd Professor Frances Young, for their help and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. In different ways, both have helped me to remain focussed on the task at hand and their thoughtful criticisms have been welcome. I would also like to record my thanks to Dr Robert Forrest who, many years ago, asked me the question which I feel I have only now answered in the pages which follow.

I am indebted to Mary Moore and Joie Davies for their proofreading. All errors that remain are mine.

Finally I would like to dedicate all that follows to my parents, Alan and Mary Moore, for their encouragement and support, to my five sons, who have had to put up with a distracted father, and especially my wife, Mary, who has shown patience beyond the call of duty.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:  DATE: 22nd October 2009

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Abbreviations

A. General Abbreviations

contra	in contrast to
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ed.	edited by, editor(s)
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
ESV	English Standard Version
et al.	*et alii,* and others
f.	following (verse or verses, pages, etc.)
Gk.	Greek
GNB	Good News Bible
i.e.	*id est*, that is
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text (of the OT)
n.d.	no date
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIV	The New International Version (1978)
no.	number
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
NT	New Testament
OG	Old Greek
OT	Old Testament
p(p).	pages(s)
passim	and elsewhere
Tg.	Targum
tr.	translation, translator, translated (by)
vol.	volume
v(v).	verse(s)

B. Abbreviations of Periodicals, Reference Works, and Serials

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992*
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJSR	*Association for Jewish Studies Review*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.* ed. H. Temporini and W. Hasse, Berlin
AramS	*Aramaic Studies*
AsiaJT	*Asia Journal of Theology*
AThR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BAAAS	*Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999
BerOl	Berit Olam
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BibArch	*Biblical Archeologist*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BibJS	Biblical and Judaic Studies
BibNot	Biblische Notizen
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRev	*Bible Review*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die NeutestamentlicheWissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBRA	Collectanea Biblica et Religiosa Antiqua
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
CH	*Church History*
CHECL	The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature
Chr	*Christus*
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series

CrInq	*Critical Inquiry*
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
CurBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
DLNT	Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments.
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
EuA	*Erbe und Auftrag*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExAud	*Ex Auditu*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
GNS	*Good News Studies*
Herm	*Hermeneia - a Critical and historical commentary on the Bible*
HeyJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HistTh	*History and Theory*
HR	*History of Religions*
HTKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HZAG	*Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.
IBS	*Irish Biblical Studies*
Im	*Images*
Int	*Interpretation*
IRHR	*International Review for the History of Religions*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JAB	*Journal for the Aramaic Bible*
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JerPersp	*Jerusalem Perspective*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JPSTC	JPS Torah Commentary
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*

JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JSSR	*Journal for the Scientific Study of the Bible*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Koi	*Koinonia*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTStud	Library of New Testament Studies
ModTheol	*Modern Theology*
NAC	New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDNTT	New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
NLH	*New Literary History*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Numen	*Numen: International Review for the History of Religions*
PEGLMBS	Proceedings: Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies
Pillar	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PNTC	Pelican New Testament Commentaries
PoeT	*Poetics Today*
Proof	*Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*
PRS	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
Rep	*Representations*
RevRef	*La Revue Réformée*
RheRev	*Rhetoric Review*
RTL	*Revue Théologique de Louvain*
ScC	*La scuola cattolica*
Semeia	*Semeia*
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
SPhilo	*Studia Philonica*
StudBob	*Studia Bobolanum*
StudRen	Studies in the Renaissance
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigraphica

TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
Them	*Themelios*
THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

C. Abbreviations for Dead Sea Scrolls

1QM	*Milÿamah or War Scroll*
1QS	*Rule of the Community*
1QSa	*Rule of the Congregation*
CD	*Damascus Document*
T	*Temple Scroll*

D. Abbreviations for Talmudic and Rabbinic Literature

Šabb.	*Shabbat*
Yebam.	*Yebamot*
Qol. Rab.	*Qoheleth Rabbah*

E.Abbreviations for Targumic Literature

Tg. Neof.	*Targum Neofiti 1*
Tg. Onq.	*Targum Onqelos*
Tg. Ps.-J.	*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*
Frag. Tg.	*Fragmentary Tagum*
Tg. Hab.	*Targum of Habbakuk*
Tg. Is.	*Targum of Isaiah*
Tg. Jer.	*Targum of Jeremiah*
Tg. Zech.	*Targum of Zechariah*

F. Pseudepigrapha and New Testament Apocrypha

Apoc. Ab.	*Apocalypse of Abraham*
Mart. Ascen. Isa.	*Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*
Ps.-Clem.	*Pseudo-Clementines*
Ps.-Mt.	*Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*
TLevi	*Testament of Levi*

G. Abbreviations for Early Christian Writings

Augustine

Conf.	*Confessions*

Ignatius

Ign. Magn.	*To the Magnesians*

Irenaeus

Haer.	*Against Heresies*

Justin Martyr

1 Apol.	*First Apology*
Dial.	*Dialogue with Trypho*

John Chrysostom

Adv. Jud.	*Discourses against Judaizing Christians*

Origen

Princ.	*First Principles*
Res.	*On the Resurrection*

Tertullian

Paen.	*Repentance*
Prax.	*Against Praxeas*

H. Abbreviations of Classical and Hellenistic Writers and Sources

Athenaeus

Deipn.	*Deipnosophistae*

Diodorus Siculus

Bib. Hist.	*Bibliotheca Historica*

Josephus

J.W.	*Jewish War*
Ant.	*Jewish Antiquities*

Philo

Abraham	*On the life of Abraham*
Cherubim	*On the Cherubim*
Confusion	*On the Confusion of Tongues*
Decalogue	*On the Decalogue*
Dreams	*On Dreams*
Embassy	*On the Embassy to Gaius*

Flight *On Flight and Finding*
Giants *On Giants*
Migration *On the Migration of Abraham*
Moses *On the Life of Moses*
Posterity *On the Posterity of Cain*
Q.G. *Questions and Answers on Genesis*
Sacrifices *On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel*
Sobriety *On Sobriety*
Unchangeable *That God Is Unchangeable*

Plutarch

Cat. Min. *Cato Minor*

Suetonius

Nero *Life of Nero*

Theophilus

Autol. *To Autolycus*

1
Introduction

> [25]Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! [26]Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" [27]Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.
>
> Luke 24:25-27

The earliest Christian communities were keen to portray their understanding of Christ as "according to the scriptures", and this desire to demonstrate a continuity with the writings and self-understanding of the Jews of their day forms an important part of the early Christian apologetic. However, this influence has often been understood in terms of prophecy fulfilment whereby Jesus is seen as the 'target' of various prophetic oracles which encapsulate Messianic hopes. In contrast to this, the portrayal of the Incarnation in the New Testament is seen as something new and therefore not "according to the scriptures". That is a view which is in need of challenge. In his 1996 Didsbury Lectures, Bauckham commented that:

> much of the creative theological thinking in earliest Christianity was done by way of Old Testament exegesis. ... They brought the Old Testament text into relationship with the history of Jesus in a process of mutual interpretation from which some of their profoundest theological insights sprang.[1]

It is this interplay with the Old Testament in the realm of the incarnation which is at the heart of this thesis. It is increasingly clear that to view Judaism within the Second Temple period as a monolithic, credal entity is to be guilty of anachronism. The literature which survives from this period bears witness to broad and imaginative

1. Bauckham, 1998b, p47.

re-interpretations of "the scriptures". One such transformation of scripture was to take those passages understood to represent the "appearing God" and re-understand them in the light of Christ. This allows for the incarnation to be portrayed as "according to the scriptures".[2]

I. Outline

There are four broad sections to this investigation, which are outlined below.

a) Communities and their Texts

The re-working of a textual tradition is something which can be seen within Judaism since (at least) the Exile. In the literature which has survived from that period, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is evident that the various groupings and communities were involved in a process of re-imagining scriptures. There was a widespread production of a range of writings which can be seen to build on, and transform, the Scriptural tradition as it had been handed down to them. The proliferation of such writings and groupings within Second Temple Judaism is a well-chewed topic. The post-Exilic period is a productive one for theological speculation and the apocalyptic expectations made these speculations all the more rich.

The thesis will begin by giving attention to how the Gospel communities are likely to interpret pre-existing Jewish traditions as embodied in the Scriptures. Initially the nature of these communities as a Textual Community (i.e. a community which has a text or a specific interpretation of a text at its core) will be set out. The interpretative techniques of other Jewish communities will be looked at in order to identify the exegetical strategies one would expect to be at play within the communities of the Gospel writers. In this there will be an emphasis made with regard to the 'imagination' of exegesis. It will be argued that there is an unsurprising commonality of 'imagination' between the early Christian and Second-Temple Jewish strategies of interpretation, even if the results of that interpretation are

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2. Reflecting on Paul's use of this phrase, Lindars wrote: "This at once alerts us to expect the importance of the Old Testament for New Testament theology to be in the realm of Christology, or rather of the person and work of Christ". Lindars, 1976, p59.

somewhat different. In other words, the same chisels have produced different carvings from the same block of wood.[3]

The clear implication of this is that one would expect that what may be termed the Christ Event would be interpreted by the Gospel writers in light of the pre-existing Jewish scriptures. Or, to put it in a way with more redolent New Testament echoes, that the life *and nature* of Christ is 'according to the scriptures'. One consequence of Textual Communities is that they are concerned with themes and meta-narratives. As Lieu notes:

> The early church met this need [for continuity with Judaism] by a largely typological exegesis of the past: it is our greater historical consciousness which demands a continuity that can be expressed in historical terms.[4]

Appropriately enough, this discussion will also contain a consideration of the relationship between the earliest Church and the other Jewish communities. The early date of split between the two will be questioned and it will be argued that even if the two camps are opposed, they would still feasibly share a core set of beliefs and exegetical techniques. In other words, one should be speaking of infighting or factionalism rather than entire separation.

Having asserted a strong reliance upon the scriptures, this section naturally contains a discussion of precisely which texts are at the centre of the Gospel Communities. Frances Young has described the later Christian approach to the Jewish scriptures as a "take-over bid" such that "... Christians had to justify their extraordinary expropriation of texts which were not similarly interpreted by their true owners".[5] As has been noted above, this process can be seen within the New Testament which sees the Christ-event as being "according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

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3. Fishbane opens his magnum opus on Biblical Interpretation with a sentence which helps illustrate this: "One of the most remarkable features of the great world religions is the emergence to independent dignity of traditions and commentaries which supplement the original authoritative teachings—be these latter the product of divine revelation or human wisdom.", Fishbane, 1985 p1.
4. Lieu, 1994, p106.
5. Young, 2002, p54 and the rest of that chapter.

Two questions arise from this: what are the scriptures and in what fashion were they known to the early Christian communities? It will be argued that the Hebrew canon which forms the basis for most Biblical scholarship is an unhelpful background against which to consider the Gospels. Whereas there are critical and canonical arguments for the Hebrew Canon to be used within contemporary Christian communities, it will be argued below that the Scriptures as transmitted in Greek are the Scriptures which are in mind for the New Testament communities. This results in not only the consideration of the Greek translations but also the wider range of writings which these traditions represent.

It will also be argued that the Targumim provide an insight into synagogical theologizing and, whilst being careful to avoid anachronism, can provide hints of the speculations of Second Temple Judaism. Rather than a reliance upon a Hebrew canon or proto-canon the Greek scriptures will be the 'lead-version' with due attention being given to Targumic tradition as well as Hebrew tradition where appropriate.

b) Theophany and Exodus

After due consideration of the relationship between the Gospel communities and the Jewish textual traditions, theophany within the Old Testament will be examined. The aim here is not to trace each and every event which can be said to fall within a particular definition of theophany, but rather to identify the manner in which these theophanies are portrayed. After all, what is being investigated is the manner in which Mark and John *portray* the incarnation.

The portrayal of theophany within the Jewish scriptures has been characterized as a 'type-scene', a block of narrative which conforms to a recurrent pattern. This is of particular importance when considering the Christology in Mark which takes a more narrative form.

A second strand in this section is the consideration of the hope for a future theophanic return to Zion. With this in mind the later prophetic material, especially

the later portions of Isaiah, will be examined in order to demonstrate that there is a hope of another Exodus, which is portrayed in terms of the first. So it is that a way will be prepared that both the LORD and his people will travel, and the goal will be renewed worship at the mountain (this time Zion/Jerusalem instead of Sinai). One impetus to this hope for a future return was the growing sense during the post-Exilic period that the return was incomplete.

This section will also contain an investigation into the understandings of the nature of the 'body of God' so as to give a clue as to the imagined form of a theophany. The significance of this is to suggest that 'anthropomorphic' imaginings of God are not simply a 'naivety' of early/Biblical Judaism but also a feature of the Second Temple period. Thus it is natural for a theophany to be in human form. In fact it would be better to say that humans are 'Theomorphic'.

The purpose of this is to suggest that the early Christian communities understood the actions of Christ as fulfilling the widespread hope for a return of the LORD to Zion.

c) New Patterns of Presence

The hope of a New Exodus was only partially met when the exiles returned from Babylon. Whilst the people had returned, the LORD did not appear to have returned. The Temple had not witnessed the presence of the LORD in the manner of the Solomonic Temple and the Land remained under occupation.

One response to this was a continued hope for a future return, something investigated in the section. An alternative set of responses can be seen in what have become known as personified attributes, or aspects, of God: namely Word, Wisdom, Torah and the little noted Voice of God. Thus it was suggested that the LORD had, in fact, returned to Zion but in another form/mode. Rather than in theophanic presence, the LORD is present in, for example, the Torah.

These patterns of presence are utilised in the New Testament, but their significance is more than simply a utilisation of supposed Jewish 'hedges' to avoid

anthropomorphisation. In fact, there are theophanic elements in these portrayals. As will be seen in John's Gospel in particular, Jesus is portrayed in terms of these new patterns of presence as well as theophany. There is a thorough equating of all the patterns of presence, be it theophany or 'attribute', with Christ so that all is seen as being summed up in his person.

d) Two Communities: Mark and John

The fourth section takes all of the above and applies it to two Gospels: Mark and John. These two have been chosen as they represent opposite poles of the Gospel genre. Mark is still widely held to be the earliest of the Gospels and the one on whom the Synoptics built. Conversely, John is the last of the Gospels and betrays limited knowledge of the Synoptics at best. Taking these two Gospels therefore allows one to see how the theophany theme played to two very different communities and at two different stages within the development of what becomes the New Testament.

Following these sections, the thesis will conclude that the theme of theophany - as reinterpreted by the life, death and resurrection of Christ - is an important and overlooked aspect of Gospel Christology. Jesus is portrayed as the 'enfleshed' fulfilment of the covenant/theophany narrative of Judaism.

II. Limitations, Assumptions and Definitions

a) Theophany

Theophany is a word which has been pressed into service to cover a variety of meanings. In its widest sense, the term includes various 'natural' phenomena such as fire or cloud. Here, the term will be limited to refer to a more specific self-manifestation of God in anthropomorphic terms.

Recent years have seen much consideration given to what might be called intermediary figures, such as principal angels, patriarchs who have been exalted in heaven, and so on. These will not be considered since the case that these figures are

'divine' still remains to be satisfactorily made.[6] Rather, they would appear to be servants of God.

Secondly there will be consideration given to those 'attributes' of God which are present within the Jewish scriptures (Word, Wisdom, Voice etc). This group may appear extraneous since they are not normally identified with theophany, but within the Second Temple period these figures took on a more reified character within some strands of literature as well as in versions of the books which were later understood as canonical. This will be explored below. It is the fact that these attributes are 'according to the scriptures' which demand their inclusion.

Moreover, unlike the intermediary figure mentioned above, these figures participate in God's divinity. Bauckham expresses this well:

> In a variety of ways they *express* God, his mind and his will, in relation to the world. They are not created beings, but nor are they semi-divine entities occupying some ambiguous status between the one God and the rest of reality. They belong to the unique divine identity[7].

In short, theophany will be understood as appearances of God or an attribute of God which were understood to have a form within the Second Temple period. Accompanying manifestations such as weather phenomena are excluded.

b) Authorship

Where mention is made of an author, say 'Mark' or 'John', no claims are being made as to authorship. Rather, the name is being used as a convenient shorthand for the communities and authors who are responsible for the texts as we have them. In a related manner, there is no attempt to discern authorial strands within the Old Testament texts. To talk of, for example, deutero-Isaiah when dealing with the use of the text in the Second Temple period is anachronistic. The book will be referred to as Isaiah, without implying that the whole text is the product of Isaiah the son of Amoz.

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6. For a useful discussion on the relative merits of these figures, see Bauckham, 1998b, chapter one.
7. Bauckham, 1998b, p21. Emphasis his.

c) The Historical Jesus

This is no quest for the Historical Jesus, but rather an investigation into the communities which produced the Gospels of John and Mark. If any reconstruction of thought and intent is to be undertaken it is the thought and intent of the final redactors of the text. So, for example, no claims are being made for the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus or even his intentions (except where the two Gospel writers seek to represent their understanding of it); rather what is under investigation is precisely what use the Gospels make of the words they report. It is a consideration of what is clearly not the earliest layer of the Jesus tradition but the handling of that tradition by the Gospel communities.

In all of this it is acknowledged that authorial intent is in all probability impossible to recover, and texts have a habit of producing a multiplicity of meanings, but some reconstruction remains possible. In particular, are there clues as to the meaning of the Jewish Scriptures as perceived by the, say, Markan community which can be gleaned from that Gospel?

d) The Greek Scriptures, OG and LXX

As will be discussed below the manuscript discoveries at, amongst other places, Qumran has borne witness to a multiplicity of versions of texts which now have a fixed, canonical form. This is true for the scriptures preserved in all languages, and this means that to give the Greek Scriptures a name is inherently misleading. So it is that a brief glance at the literature concerned with the Greek Scriptures reveals debates over terminology: should one use the Septuagint for traditions which might predate what has come down to us as the Septuagint? Is Old Greek the best term for these traditions? If so, though, what of those occasions where multiple traditions are seen?

A common example of this debate is seen where the citations contained within the New Testament are discussed. At times these diverge from what is preserved as the Septuagint, which sometimes leads to suggestions that the authors have made their own translations. Yet, it is equally feasible that these citations represent earlier

layers or divergent traditions.

Given this potential minefield, a generic title - Greek Scriptures - will be used to refer to these writings. There is an intended vagueness here, as the term will also include those writings which were later excluded from the Hebrew Canon.

III. Scholarship on Theophany and Christ

The central theme of this thesis - the role of the Old Testament theophanies in the Gospels of Mark and John - is one which, as Dearman noted in 2002, "does not often play a significant role in modern scholarship when interpreting the origins of the Christian doctrine of the incarnation".[8] In a similar vein two years later, Gieschen wrote that:

> Although remnants of a christological interpretation of the Old Testament theophanies certainly continue to be found in the church, the historical criticism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has severely curtailed such exegesis of the Old Testament by judging it to be illegitimate and anachronistic.[9]

No doubt Gieschen and Dearman are correct in seeing this as a result of a prevalence of Historical-Critical analysis, yet the recent rise in other forms of analysis has failed to produce much writing on the Old Testament roots of New Testament Christology. A relevant example here would be Savran's 2006 book *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative*, which treats theophany as a 'type scene'. Whilst there is much useful discussion of the theme and its depiction, the 'Biblical Narrative' in view is the Hebrew Old Testament. There is not a single reference to the New Testament in an Index of References which includes Rabbinic, Pseudepigraphal and other Jewish authors. This is a shame since, as will be discussed below, Sarvan's work is highly applicable to the New Testament.

A less recent example would be Neihaus' *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* which was published in 1995. Whilst there is a

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8. Dearman, 2002, p31.
9. Gieschen, 2004, p114.

consideration of the theme of theophany in the 'New Testament and Beyond' in the final chapter it is limited to seeking allusions and seeing the pattern of theophany within the Angelophanies of the New Testament. In other words there is no discussion of *Christophany* as such.

None of this is to denigrate the work of these two authors, but simply to make the obvious point that Scholarship usually operates within its own field alone. So it it that the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, the New Testament and the Early Church each command a separate discipline. Moreover, the prevalence of one or other methodology has tended to obscure alternative approaches that may exist in the earliest generations of Christian interpreters. As Müller puts it: "The fact remains that because biblical exegesis sees it as its object to reach a purely historical understanding of its texts, historico-critical biblical search has weakened the bond between the Bible and systematic theology".[10]

If one were simply to consider the appearance of God in human form in the Old Testament, the pickings are equally thin. In 2008, Hamori noted the absence within the field of biblical studies of any "discussion ... of such a thing as 'human theophany'. Even specialized work on the subject of theophany has not included this as a category".[11] Her doctoral research on this phenomenon therefore makes an important contribution, but any discussion of the use of this theme within the New Testament falls outside the scope of her research.

A search of the literature published over the past decade, in all languages, which discusses the role of theophany within the New Testament has produced scant results, as will be seen below.

a) J. Andrew Dearman

In 2002 Dearman contributed a chapter entitled *Theophany, Anthropomorphism, and the Imago Dei: Some Observations About the Incarnation in the Light of the Old*

10. Müller, 1996, p19.
11. Hamori, 2008, p1.

Testament to the 2002 volume: *The Incarnation - An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*. In the chapter he suggest that "two elements in the OT concerned with anthropomorphism, namely accounts of theophanies and texts concerning the imago Dei, can still contribute to the understanding of the incarnation".[12]

Whilst he acknowledges that there are anti-anthropomorphic themes within some parts of the Old Testament, Dearman suggests that these two elements provide connections with early Christian belief. His concluding paragraph is worth quoting in full:

> When all is said, however, about reading strategies, cultural contexts, and conceptual limitations, the most important connection between the OT and the doctrine of the incarnation is finally the person of Jesus Christ himself. In his pre-and post-resurrection life he embodies the metacorporeal mysteries to which the imago Dei and the theophanies of the OT give authoritative witness. The correspondence between OT theophany, imago Dei, and incarnation is theological typology and a gift from God. The earliest Christian communities began with faith in the person of Jesus and they worked back in the authoritative tradition of the OT to provide vocabulary and conceptual underpinning for their Christology. And although no line of thought in the OT leads inevitably to the doctrine of the incarnation (because of the difference between anticipation and reality, seed-bed and flower), when interpreters work back to the OT from the claim that 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14: 9), they find themselves in mysteriously familiar territory.[13]

b) Charles Gieschen

Within the last ten years a single journal article has been published which is close to the subject of this thesis: *The Real Presence of the Son Before Christ* by Charles Gieschen. In this, he notes that within contemporary scholarship "the primary understanding of Christ in the Old Testament is one of *prophecy*, not *presence*",[14] an understanding which views "christocentric exegesis as spiritual eisegesis that reads Christ into the Old Testament with uncritical lenses ground and colored by the study of Jesus in the New Testament".[15]

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12. Dearman, 2002, p33.
13. Dearman, 2002, p45ff.
14. Gieschen, 2004, p105.
15. Gieschen, 2004, p106.

Gieschen notes that the Ante-Nicene fathers were happy to interpret the theophanies of the Old Testament as portraying Christ, but that later early writers (such as Augustine) were more hostile to such a reading. Similarly, whereas Luther is happy to identify Jesus with the actor of various Old Testament events such as the Exodus and the giving of the Law, Calvin permits identification with the Angel of the Lord only.

Having noted this trend of interpretation, Gieschen considers the Old Testament theophanies (he limits these to those after Genesis 1-2). He states that "[t]he theological foundation for this understanding is the tension within the Old Testament between the theophanies of YHWH and the testimony that one cannot see YHWH and live".[16] The Old Testament often deals with this tension by introducing titles such as the Angel of YHWH. Gieschen goes on to write:

> most concept-orientated Western thinkers understand Name, Glory, and Word as abstract, non-personal attributes of God rather than as visible and personal realities. Careful study of these theophanies leads to the conclusion that it is best to understand each as a hypostasis of YHWH, namely an aspect of YHWH that is depicted with independent personhood.[17]

He continues by observing that the New Testament itself can provide a way to interpret these earlier scriptures, and their method legitimatises such interpretation by Christians. He then goes on to group theophanies into four categories: the Angel of YHWH, the Name of YHWH, the glory of YHWH, the Word of YHWH and sets out New Testament application of Christ to these theophanies. He then proposes that the speech of YHWH is, in fact, understood as the speech of Christ.

c) Jonathan Stephen

Stephen's 1998 devotional book *Theophany: Close encounters with the Son of God* considers the theophanies of Genesis in a Christophanical manner. There is no consideration of the role of theophany in the portrayal of the Incarnation, neither is there any engagement with scholarly literature, but it is the single book in recent years which does consider the Old Testament theophanies as Christophanies.

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16. Gieschen, 2004, p114.
17. Gieschen, 2004, p115.

d) Larry Hurtado

In his 2003 *magnum opus*, *Lord Jesus Christ*, Hurtado discusses the "wide and deep appropriation" of the Old Testament by earliest Christianity (a term by which he means the hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple)[18] and sets out three strategies by which this was achieved: "proof-texts", a typological reading of the Old Testament and "the interpretation of the Old Testament accounts of theophanies as manifestations of the preincarnate Son of God". He goes on to write that "[a]ll three approaches originated in the first century and are exhibited already in the New Testament".[19]

It is, of course, the third of these techniques which is of particular interest here and in light of the lack of consideration of this theme noted above, Hurtado's introductory comments bear quoting in full:

> The third approach to finding (and demonstrating) Jesus in the Old Testament is just as bold, and indeed, may well appear still more bizarre to many moderns. The focus here is on a number of Old Testament passages that narrate manifestations of God (the technical term for such a scene is "theophany"). In this approach these events are presented as manifestations of the "preincarnate" Son of God.[20]

Hurtado's consideration of this theme is brief - it covers five pages - and he considers Justin Martyr (*Dial.*) and Philo who he views as drawing on the Wisdom tradition evidenced in passages such as Proverbs 8:22-38 and Sirach 24. He then concludes that:

> [f]or the early Christian handling of these Old Testament texts that Justin exemplifies, the prior and essential basis is the belief that the historic Jesus was the incarnate form of the preexistent and divine Son/Word of God, through and with whom God created all things.[21]

This is a view to be found in the New Testament too, with Jesus being the one through whom all things are created (1 Corinthians 8:4-6; John 1:1-2; Colossians 1:15-17). Moreover statements such as "they drank from the spiritual rock that

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18. Hurtado, 2003, p565.
19. Hurtado, 2003, pp565ff.
20. Hurtado, 2003, p574.
21. Hurtado, 2003, p576.

followed them, and the rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4) "must surely be taken as asserting that in his preincarnate mode Jesus was the divine figure who engaged Israel in the Exodus narrative".[22] In this category too falls Jude 5, "Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe". This reading, of course, is strengthened if one takes the variant reading where Jesus is in the place of the Lord, but either can be seen to make the point.

A further example, and more relevant for the consideration at hand, is that of John 12:41: "Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him".

So it is that Hurtado concludes that Justin "did not originate the basic idea that the preincarnate Jesus could be found active in certain Old Testament passages",[23] rather he was building upon earlier foundations.

e) James Borland

Borland begins the first chapter of his *Christ in the Old Testament* by defining Christophanies as "those unsought, intermittent and temporary, visible and audible manifestations of God the Son in human form, by which God communicated something to certain conscious human beings on earth prior to the birth of Jesus Christ".[24]

In the second chapter Borland sets out his understanding that the "angel of the Lord" is, in fact, to be identified with Christ in terms of the descriptions of theophany. In the next chapter there is a consideration of the form of these appearances, with the conclusion that these are in human form and were not "phantom apparitions".[25] Finally, Borland proposes some implications for Biblical theology before appending a brief history of the treatment of the theme.

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22. Hurtado, 2003, p577.
23. Hurtado, 2003, p577.
24. Borland, 1999, p32.
25. Borland, 1999, p99.

IV. Contribution of the Thesis

As can be seen, the material which deals with the subject of this thesis is scant. In those cases where some attention is given, the role of the theme within the Gospels is not investigated and the approach taken is somewhat different from that which will be seen below. This thesis will contribute to the filling of this gap within New Testament scholarship and, it is hoped, will also make a contribution to wider Christological debates as well as the discussion of the use of the Old Testament in the New. In addition, there will be a sustained consideration of the role of the 'Voice of God', which has received very little attention before (as will be seen in the discussion below).

In terms of its methodology, this thesis will propose that the most fruitful context for the interpretation of the New Testament is the intertestamental literature, especially those writings which seek to reinterpret pre-existing scriptural themes. This is not to say that the New Testament simply takes over these themes - although some are taken over - but that the exegetical understandings and methods are allied. It is here that the recent focussing of attention on the nature of Textual Communities is of use. This thesis will propose that these communities form an important basis for the understanding of the exegetical technique of the Second Temple period. In particular, it will be asserted that the Gospels give an answer to the question asked in many intertestamental quarters: how is the LORD present in Israel now that we have returned from the Exile?

The argument that the theophanic material of the Second Temple period lies behind the portrayal of Christ is not one that has been made within modern scholarship. To be sure, Christians of the pre-Enlightenment era were comfortable with such a notion but the growth of critical methods within the Modern period have led to this view being seen as no longer valid.

This thesis seeks to show that within Second Temple Judaism there were precursors for the understanding of Christ as what may be described as an 'enfleshed

theophany', and that there is evidence of this view in the New Testament itself.

2

Justin Martyr and Theophany: Something New?

> But now, return to the original topic and prove to us that the prophetic Spirit ever admits the existence of another God besides the Creator of all things.[26]

The identification of Jesus with certain of the theophanies of the Jewish scriptures is something which is explicit in Justin Martyr and his notion of a 'second God' is often credited as an innovation of Justin. Skaursane's words are not unusual: "... the passages treating the theophanies and proving the existence of a 'second God', are perhaps the most original contribution made by Justin to the development of the Scriptural proof".[27]

Justin is, however, self-consciously working within the traditions of the apostles, as will be seen below, and this thesis sets out to show that he is not the originator of this view. His treatment of the theophanies does not emerge from nowhere, but is something which is traceable in the New Testament.

Whilst the *Dialogue with Trypho* was written some forty or so years later than John,[28] Justin is writing within a Palestinian milieu and is keen to portray himself as passing on the apostolic tradition of the exegesis of the Jewish scriptures.[29] It is the correct interpretation of these Scriptures - explained by Christ and transmitted by the

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26. *Dial.* 55:1.
27. Skarsaune, 1987, p409.
28. The Dialogue is often dated to just after the Bar Kokhba revolt given that Trypho describes himself as fleeing from the war. A date in the mid second century therefore seems likely.
29. For a discussion on this see the Prelude to Skarsaune, 1987.

apostles - which forms the basis, in Justin's view, of his arguments.[30]

The importance of Justin to the investigation in hand is twofold. Firstly, his insistence that he is within the tradition of the church would suggest that this is a probable source for his writings on theophany. Secondly, if Second Temple Judaism can be seen to adumbrate this view too - as will be discussed below - then there is a clear trajectory of thought within which the New Testament can be placed.

I. Theophany and Justin

The primary thrust of Justin's argument in the *Dialogue* is to prove the existence of what Hurtado describes as "a second divine figure"[31] in the Jewish scriptures. As Justin puts it to Trypho:

> Let us return to the Scriptures and I shall try to convince you that he who is said to have appeared to Abraham, Jacob and Moses, and is called God, is distinct from God, the Creator; distinct, that is, in number but not in mind (γνώμῃ).[32]

Justin, it should be noted, is not seeking to establish the existence of another, separate deity. He is concerned to maintain a monotheistic imperative, whilst demonstrating that the Old Testament admits of some distinction within that monotheism. The underlying assumption - called by one "absolute" and "paramount"[33] - throughout this argument is the transcendence of God. Thus Trypho is told:

> ... yet no-one with even the slightest intelligence would dare to assert that the Creator of all things left his super-celestial realms to make himself visible in a little spot on earth.[34]

It should be noted here that Justin is "generally recognized as a man of Middle Platonism"[35] which lays stress upon the transcendence and immutability of God who,

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30. cf *Dial.* 53 and 76. This idea is also to be found in *1 Apol.* 10, 49.
31. Hurtado, 1998, p141, n54. Hurtado's representation of Justin lacks nuance.
32. *Dial.* 56:11. All translations are taken from Justin Martyr, 2003.
33. Trakatellis, 1976, p86.
34. *Dial.* 60:2.
35. Bos, 2002, p274.

as a consequence, does not deal directly with material things.[36]

With this transcendence as a foundation, Justin's case for theophany being, in fact, Christophany is built on a number of theophanic appearances made to Abraham, Jacob, Moses (in the burning bush) and Joshua. There are also appeals made to material in other passages which already by that time have a Christological interpretation[37].

a) Abraham, Mamre and Sodom

Chapter 56 of the *Dialogue* introduces the theophany theme with a discussion of Mamre (Genesis 18) with the three who appear to Abraham. His first task is to counter the objection that the first verse of this chapter deals with a different incident from the remainder of the chapter. He therefore seeks to link 'the LORD' of verse one with the words of the men/angels later in the chapter. This he does by reference to Genesis 21:12 which is put forward as the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 18:10. He writes:

> Do you not understand, therefore, that he who promised under the oak tree that he would return, since he knew he would be needed to counsel Abraham to do what Sarah wished, did return according to the Scriptures, and is God, as these following words indicate: And God said to Abraham: Let it not seem grevious to you for the boy and for your bondwoman?[38].

In other words since the one who returns in Genesis 21 is described as God, the one who promised to return in Genesis 18 must also be God; thus we have in Genesis 18 an appearance of the LORD accompanied by two angels. Trypho concedes this point but maintains that Justin has failed to prove that there is "another God" apart from the Father and so Justin then seeks to draw a distinction (in number, not will) between the one who appeared to Abraham and "him who made all things". This he does by examining the events at Sodom in chapter 19 of Genesis.

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36. Hagg, 2006, p183. Boyarin has wondered if Second-Temple Judaism had a hand in creating middle-Platonism, Boyarin, 2001a, p248.
37. So Trakatellis, 1976, p84. These passages include such as Proverbs 8:21 - 36, Genesis 1:26 - 28; 3:22 and Psalms 110 and 45.
38. *Dial.* 56:8.

Since the 'lord' in verse 18 is singular, Lot is addressing only one of the angels who is, in fact, the same God who appeared to Abraham in the previous chapter. This becomes significant in verse 24 where "the LORD [i.e. the one who conversed with Lot in verse 18] rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the LORD out of heaven [i.e. the one who is transcendent]". Here, it is argued, we have two "LORDs" one in heaven and one on earth who appears to Abraham at Mamre and Lot at Sodom.

In making the argument, further evidence for this position is adduced from Psalms 110:1 and 45:6, 7 both of which have a New Testament heritage, but Justin's use of the theophanies is significant. In fact Trakatellis has noted that Genesis 19:24 appears to be a key Christological text for Justin, being used six times in the *Dialogue*.[39] This passage and the two Psalms previously mentioned are used to establish two Lords/Gods.

This passage of the Dialogue has a further implication which is explored in its next chapter, which deals with Jacob. By giving a Christological interpretation to chapters 18 and 19 of Genesis, the various descriptions given of the divine agent are applied to Jesus. This forms an important part of his Christological exegesis.[40]

b) Jacob and the language of Theophany

Having looked at the two 'Lords' of Sodom, Justin then turns to Jacob in chapter 58 and in particular to the language used to describe the various theophanies experienced by that patriarch. He argues that:

> Moses states in Scripture that he who is termed God, and who appeared to the patriarchs, is also called Angel and Lord, in order that by these expressions you may recognize him as the minister of the Father of all things, which you have already admitted, but which through additional arguments you shall believe more firmly.[41]

The appearances at Haran, Peniel, Luz and Bethel are considered in quick succession

39. Trakatellis, 1976, p65.
40. Trakatellis, 1976, p67
41. *Dial.* 58:3. Trakatellis takes this to be the key sentence in the chapter. Trakatellis, 1976, p69.

and Genesis chapters 31, 32 and 35 are cited. In each of these places there is a fluidity of language where the "angel of God" refers to himself as the "God of Bethel" (Genesis 31:12 - 13), a "man" is identified as God (Genesis 32:24 - 30) and God appears to Jacob in Genesis 35:9. This builds on the argument set out in relation to Abraham in chapter 56 (one writer has suggested that it could even be viewed as an appendix to chapter 56)[42] and reinforces the view that the Old Testament is rather fluid in its language when referring to the divine agents of theophanies. In the appearances to Abraham and Jacob we have the theophany described as an angel, man, lord and God.

The point Justin is making here is simply that the God who appears to Jacob, cannot be the Father since he is also called "Angel of God". Whereas the will is identical, the number is not.[43]

c) The burning bush

In chapters 59 and 60 the discussion of the appellations given to the theophanic agents continues:

> Allow me now to show you from the words of the book of Exodus how this very Person who was at the same time [Angel] and God and Lord and Man, and who was seen by Abraham and Jacob, also appeared and talked to Moses from the flame of the fiery bush.[44]

Trypho raises the initial objection that there were two persons within the bush: the angel who appeared in the flame, and God who spoke with Moses.[45] This does not overly worry Justin since the God in Trypho's interpretation would still be distinct from the transcendent God who could not be contained in a bush. However, Justin continues, the language in this case follows a similar pattern to the appearances to Jacob with there being only one divine agent called both angel and God. That said, the "appearing God"[46] is again not the Father since he is the self-described God of

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42. Trakatellis, 1976, p69.
43. Skarsaune, 1987, p208.
44. *Dial.* 59:1.
45. *Dial.* 60.
46. A useful phrase of Skaursane's (e.g. Skarsaune, 1987, p208).

Abraham et al, meaning the one who appeared to Abraham and it has already been proved in chapter 56 that this is not God the Father.

The appearance to Moses serves to further Justin's point in an important way. Thus far he has been at pains to show that the Christ was involved in key points of Old Testament salvation history (as will be developed below) and dealt with the Patriarchs. With the theophany in the burning bush "even his name was revealed to Moses"[47] - "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob ..." (Exodus 3:6) - which Justin interprets, as noted above, as the one who appeared to Abraham and so on.

d) Joshua

> I shall now show from the Scriptures that God has begotten of himself a certain rational power as a beginning before all creatures. The Holy Spirit indicates this power by various titles, sometimes the Glory of the Lord, at other times, Son, or Wisdom, or Angel, or God, or Lord, or Word. He even called himself Commander-in-chief when he appeared in human guise to Joshua, the son of Nun.[48]

The last of the theophanies Justin considers is that of the "commander of the army of the LORD" in Joshua 5:13 - 6:2. It should be noted that Justin considers this passage as describing one event without any discontinuity. Hence the LORD of 6:2, the commander of 5:15 and the man of 5:13 are one and the same. Whilst nothing is added to Justin's argument by the inclusion of this event, it does serve as a buttress to all that has gone before, adds another of Israel's great figures to the cast and another divine name (commander) to the list of appellations for the divine agent.[49]

The next portion of *Dialogue* 61 considers Proverbs 8, which is prefigured by the using of "son" in the extended quotation above, in order to establish a second divine agent. In the concluding chapter of this portion of the argument, chapter 62, Justin makes mention of the plurals in Genesis 1:26 (Let us make man in our image) and Genesis 3:22 (The man has become like one of us).

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47. Skarsaune, 1987, p431.
48. *Dialogue* 61:1.
49. Trakatellis, 1976, p80.

e) The Second Divine Agent

Justin's insistence on a Christological interpretation of the (broadly) patriarchal theophanies is a first within the extant literature of the Church Fathers.

The impetus behind chapters 56 to 62 of the *Dialogue* is to establish the existence of a second divine person within the scriptures. The evidence provided by the theophanies is further buttressed by passages already in use by the early Christians from Proverbs 8 and Psalms 110 as well as Genesis 1 and 3.

Underpinning the argument is an insistence upon the absolute transcendence of God the Father. This insistence is most strongly put in Chapter 60 (quoted above) and is assumed. This transcendence ensures that any theophanic manifestations cannot be of "the Father and Maker of all things" but must be of a second divine person. This divine person demands a Christological interpretation.

In *Dialogue* 127:1-2, whilst concluding the argument, Justin summarises (emphasis mine):

> [1]And the other statements from the lawgiver and the prophets are very similar. And I presume that I have shown sufficiently that when God says, 'God went up from Abraham', or, 'The Lord spoke to Moses', and, 'The Lord went down to see the tower which the children of men built', or, 'God closed the ark of Noah from the outside', *you should not imagine that the Unbegotten God himself went down or went up from any place*.
>
> [2]*For, the ineffable Father and Lord of all neither comes to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor arises, but always remains in his place, wherever it may be*, acutely seeing and hearing, not with eyes or ears, but with a power beyond description...

Here, again, is the transcendence of God who cannot exist within his creation. The thought continues (3-4, emphasis mine):

> [3]How, then, could he converse with anyone, or be seen by anyone, or appear in the smallest place of the world, when the people were not able to behold the glory of God's messenger at Sinai, and when Moses had not the power to enter the tabernacle he had built, when it was resplendent with the glory of God; and when the priest could not remain standing before the shrine when Solomon brought the Ark in to the building he had erected for it in Jerusalem?

> *[4]Thus, neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any other man saw the Father and ineffable Lord of all creatures and of Christ himself, but [they saw] him who, according to God's will, is God the Son, and his angel because of his serving the Father's will; him who, by his will, became man through a virgin; who also became fire when he talked to Moses from the bush.*

This transcendent God is unapproachable. Even God's glory could not be approached by the Israelites or Moses. Thus the "Father and ineffable Lord of all" could not have conversed with the Patriarchs, but another divine agent: his Son.

There is an important by-product of this logic: the Son must not be transcendent in the same way as the Father. As Trakatellis points out, this gives Justin a dilemma: "either the Son is God like the Father, equally transcendent, and thus he should be excluded as an agent of the theophanies; or if he is the agent who appeared in the theophanies he cannot be God like the Father".[50] This dilemma is not tackled by Justin who happily repeats the apparently contradictory views. A suggested solution is that transcendence is an attribute particular to the Father and not to God.[51] This proposition draws some support from Irenaeus who speaks of the need "according to the economy of our redemption" for us to access the unapproachable Father through the Son.[52]

II. The names of the appearing God

In making the argument for Old Testament Christophanies Justin draws attention to the many appellations given to the divine agent. These he draws mainly from the texts dealing with the theophanies, but some others come from the attendant psalms and proverbs. It is worth rehearsing the list (in no particular order): Angel ("because He published to men the commands of the Father and Maker of all things")[53], man, God, Lord, minister (ὑπηρέτης), wisdom, captain, logos and the glory of the Lord. Some of these, clearly, have New Testament and testimony book sources, others are

50. Trakatellis, 1976, p87.
51. Trakatellis, 1976, p87.
52. Passage cited in Trakatellis, 1976, p87.
53. *Dial.* 60.

an expansion of these.

Towards the end of the dialogue Justin adds yet more appellations in a purple passage, such that Christ "at one time is called

- angel of great counsel,
- and Man by Ezekiel,
- and like the Son of Man by Daniel,
- and a child by Isaiah,
- and Christ and God [and] who is to be adored by David,
- and Christ and a Stone by many prophets,
- and Wisdom by Solomon, and Joseph and Judah,
- and a Star by Moses,
- and Dawn by Zechariah,
- and the Suffering One and Jacob and Israel again by Isaiah,
- and a Rod, and Flower, and Corner-Stone, and Son of God"[54]

Whilst it is worth noting these additional names, it is those which are mentioned in connection with the exegetical passages midway through the Dialogue which are more important for our purposes. Justin, though, does not stop in adding more names and he also lists more instances of manifestations of Christ in chapters 126 and 127, who:

- is the angel who spoke with Moses when the Israelites craved meat (Numbers 11:4-23),
- is the "Lord thy God" who led the Israelites over the Jordan (Deuteronomy 31:2f),
- "came down" to see the tower built at Babel (Genesis 11:5),
- shut up the door of the ark (Genesis 7:16),
- is the glory which descended on Sinai and which filled the tabernacle and temple.

54. *Dial.* 126

III. Concluding Remarks

Justin makes his argument for the divinity of Christ by seeking the pre-incarnate Christ in the pages of the Old Testament. In so doing he makes the claim that those manifestations commonly attributed to the LORD are, in fact, of Christ. This is no argument based on types, rather Christ - the "second divine agent" - appears to the patriarchs (and others) in his own right.

The second leg of Justin's argument is that this second divine agent, fully God, is called by a number of names. Thus the appearing God can be referred to as angel, man, logos and so on. The name used depends, to some extent, upon the role of the agent at that time. Whilst this thesis is only concerned with some of these appellations, it is clear that Justin is describing a pretty wholesale takeover of Scriptural motifs.

In all of this it must be reiterated that Justin did not work in a vacuum. As Skaursane has shown,[55] there is evidence that Justin is drawing upon earlier traditions for his writing and Justin himself is self-consciously remaining within the apostolic tradition handed down to him which came, ultimately, from Christ himself.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, for many, Justin's importance lies in the fact that his are the initial attempts to give such Christological significance to the theophanies of the Old Testament.[56] Certainly, it is more thoroughly developed than any extant work and that would appear to be thanks to Justin's theological genius. However, I would argue - and will - that even here Justin is working within the apostolic tradition so important to him. After all, one would not expect one who is so careful in claiming apostolic authority to cast it aside without even so much as a Pauline "I say this (I, not the Lord)". Justin's knowledge of the fourth Gospel can be illustrated by the use of material from Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus within the First Apology:

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55. Skarsaune, 1987
56. For a helpful discussion on this see Trakatellis, 1976, pp53 - 60.

> For Christ also said, "Except you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven". Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all...[57]

As will be seen there are many places within the New Testament itself where Christ is considered in light of the theophanies of the Jewish Scriptures. To be sure these passages are not as explicit or as sustained as Justin, but nonetheless they can be identified.

An important first step in the consideration of the role of theophany is to assess the manner in which the early Christian communities interacted with and transformed the pre-existing Jewish Scriptures. It is here that the model of Textual Communities will prove to be of use.

57. *1 Apol.* 61:4-5. Lincoln, 2005, p18.

3
Texts, Communities and Patterns of Re-Interpretation

Some two decades ago, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza gave her presidential address to the gathered members of the Society of Biblical Literature. In it she painted a picture of the path of Biblical scholarship as it had progressed from the late nineteenth century, and spoke of its evident desire for a scholarship which was free not only from the dogmatic shackles of the church, but also from interpretative assumptions. Yet, this supposed freedom from assumption was a chimera.

Fiorenza advocated an alternative approach to the task of biblical scholarship which had its basis in rhetorical rather than "objectivist and depoliticized" methods which are widely employed:

> A rhetorical hermeneutic does not assume that the text is a window to historical reality, nor does it operate with a correspondence theory of truth. It does not understand historical sources as data and evidence but sees them as perspectival discourse constructing their worlds and symbolic universes.
>
> Since alternative symbolic universes engender competing definitions of the world, they cannot be reduced to one meaning. Therefore, competing interpretations of texts are not simply either right or wrong, but they constitute different ways of reading and constructing historical meaning. Not detached value-neutrality but an explicit articulation of one's rhetorical strategies, interested perspectives, ethical criteria, theoretical frameworks, religious presuppositions, and sociopolitical locations for critical public discussion are appropriate in such a rhetorical paradigm of biblical scholarship.[58]

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58. Fiorenza, 1988, , p13f. Fiorenza's view is one which, it could be argued, undercuts the argument made below that the Christian and Jewish communities were arguing over the 'correct' interpretation of their shared textual base. However, it would be anachronistic to read the view represented by Fiorenza's comments back into the first century. The relevance of the above quote to the task at hand is in showing that texts are capable of being interpreted in different ways by different communities. For the early Christian communities it was the 'Christ-event' which authenticated their interpretation. of the scriptures

This process of what Fiorenza calls "perspectival discourse" can be seen within the New Testament where there is evident intertextuality with the Jewish scriptures. Citations, allusions and the very Jewishness of Jesus and his followers demonstrate this. What will be argued in all that follows is that the community around Christ, and those which grew around the apostles/Gospel writers, engaged in "different ways of reading and constructing historical meaning".[59] In considering all this it is clearly important to pay due attention to the byplay between Judaism and Christianity and the nature of what are known as textual communities.

The rise of canonical and especially redactional criticism has brought with it a heightened understanding of the value of the final redactor of the text and also the communities which gathered around those texts, often re-interpreting them and thereby forming a communal identity. So it is that Childs can write "...it has become almost a truism that meaning is determined by ... usage and by the goals of the interpreter".[60]

The setting of these communities and the interpretative air they breathed forms a significant factor in interpretation. Within Second Temple Judaism there was a proliferation of what are now considered apocryphal, deutero-canonical and pseudepigraphal writings. These are, of course, labels of a later age but what these texts constitute are the re-imaginings and interpretations of scripture of Second Temple Jewish communities which produced such a rich diversity of Judaisms. So, for example, we can appreciate that the community which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls clearly has different self-understanding from those who were centred around the Temple. The condemnation of the Temple parties within the Dead Sea Scrolls bears witness to the cohesion to be found within textual communities and the threat they feel from other interpretations of the same scriptural tradition.

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59. Fiorenza, 1988, p14.
60. Childs, 2003, p176. This is a view that Boyarin earlier puts forward with his characteristic élan: " ... I will follow much current thought in proposing that all interpretation and historiography is *representation* of the past by the present, that is, that there is no such thing as value-free, true and objective rendering of documents. They are always filtered through the cultural, socio-ideological matrix of their readers". Boyarin, 1990, p12. Emphasis his.

For our purposes, this process of communal interpretation is of great importance in understanding how the Jewish scriptures were re-understood by the New Testament communities.

I. The Interpretative Community

> ... the surprising pluriformity of text-forms witnessed by the biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests that there was as yet no standardization of the text, and no apparent concern about its lack, and, consequently, that the text was open to creative reunderstanding in a dialogical relationship with communal self-understanding in a specific context.[61]

It has proved impossible to date, with any certainty, the formation of the Old Testament canon. What can be said is that within the second temple period, there is a process of formation whereby what is now considered canonical is formed from earlier texts and traditions. This formation is accompanied by a range of other interpretative writings which today fall under the various headings of 'apocryphal', 'pseudepigraphal' or the convenient 'Gnostic'. Furthermore, as the quote above illustrates, there is little evidence for the production of a standardised version of the texts which came to be viewed as canonical. So it is that for these texts the final word had yet to be uttered.

The process of interpretation and passing on is attended to by communities or schools which are largely responsible for the production of texts. Famously, the community at Qumran not only kept different versions of books now considered canonical but also an array of other documents which sought to explicate those scrolls and other documents as having a strong community application. It has been argued that these documents used a deliberately 'biblicizing style'[62] of Hebrew which would suggest that this community desired to show some sort of continuity with the Hebrew texts that had come down to them.[63] Similarly 1 Maccabees makes use of a

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61. Lieu, 2004, p33.
62. Weitzman, 1999, p35. See also Zahn, 2007.
63. Sanders has commented that "[t]he observation that all Early Jewish literature was written more or less Scripturally has always been operative in the study of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, as well as Philo, Josephus, and the Second Testament. But the Scrolls have enhanced the observation in ways that make it one of the major

style which is similar to that of the Deuteronomic History and which, therefore, "claims legitimacy".[64]

It has been written by one Comparative Religionist that "scripture is a human activity"[65] and, moreover, "scriptures are not texts"[66]. That is to say, the modern notion of a fixed canon and text is something which develops over some period of time[67] and is absent from Second Temple Judaism in anything like the manner it is present today. That is not to deny that there are certain texts which have a 'scriptural' status, but is to suggest that to grant texts at that stage the status they enjoy in later times is anachronistic.

Drawing on Smith's work, Rogers suggests that attention should be given to what he calls "scripturalists"[68] in any study of scripture. It is the interplay between an inherited text, the consciousness of the community, the transcendent and the world around the community which, for Rogers, is the "distinctively *scriptural* dimension".[69] Even if one were to be coy about the strength of Smith's propositions, it is the case that in recent years growing attention has been given to the communal activities of texts, especially when they are viewed as oral/aural documents which are performed rather than a stable text which is transmitted.

Alongside this, the past few decades have seen an increase of a "'maximal' interpretation" of scriptural quotations within the New Testament.[70] Inevitably the

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factors in the study of all Early Jewish literature." Sanders, 1999, p39.

64. Lieu, 2004, p34. See also Boyarin, 2001b, p427.
65. Smith, 1993, p18.
66. Smith, 1993, p19. See also p223.
67. Smith suggests a process which sees its zenith in the seventh century with the production of the Quran. Smith, 1993, chapter three.
68. Rogers, 1997b.
69. Rogers, 1997b, p30 (emphasis his). He goes on to give an account of seven different ways in which the texts received at Qumran are handled.
70. Moyise, 2005, p79f. He identifies two reasons for this: the first being the Biblical Theology movement of the mid Twentieh-Century; and the second being the appropriation of the literary theory of intertextuality by the practitioners of biblical studies which leads to a re-understanding of the semiotic relationship between texts and a recognition that texts are not produced within a vacuum, but rather they bring with them the influences and understandings of the context which produced them. On

extent of the 'baggage' that the text which has been quoted, or to which an allusion has been made, carries with it is a matter of some debate. There have been voices which caution against making too strong claims for the scriptural literacy of Second Temple Jews. Given literacy rates, and the cost of and restrictive access to texts, there is a strong argument to be made that primary encounter with a text would be in a synagogue setting or in Christian circles.[71] Moreover one might question to what extent Gentile hearers would 'hear' such allusions,[72] although what is being investigated here is not the reception of a text, but its composition and in that case the implied reader and the textual community is of more relevance.

a) Texts and Communities

The example of Qumran points to a community whose commonality lies within their shared textual tradition. They are not alone; Lieu comments:

> The experience of Judaism from the mid-second century BCE demonstrates how the extension of the ability to interpret, or the emergence of different claimants to the right to interpret, could generate new groupings and self-identities.[73]

For these groupings, the text(s) around which they cohere provide them with a shared self-identity and also allow the group to claim a legitimacy or even a divine imperative.[74] One such community is, of course, the nascent Christian community. The Gospels, and no less the rest of the New Testament, lays a great stress upon the Scriptures (τὰς γραφάς) and as such they form part of this tradition of textual interpretation within Second Temple Judaism. Thus when Christ meets with the two on the way to Emmaus, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to

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the latter influence see also Moyise, 2000, pp14ff.

71. Tuckett, 2000, pp407ff. See also Achtemeier, 1990 for a discussion of the implications of orality in New Testament interpretation. For a discussion of literacy with Christian circles see Gamble, 1997, pp2-10 and more widely Harris, 1989.
72. Stanley, 1999. He writes: "In the case of Paul's quotations, the "implied readers" are Christians who are (a) broadly familiar with the Greek text of the Jewish Scriptures, (b) able to recognize immediately how specific quotations fit into the developing argument of his letter, and (c) willing to accept his quotations as valid renderings of the authoritative text. But these inferences apply only to the "implied readers" of Paul's quotations. They tell us little or nothing about the actual first-century recipients of the text". See also Tuckett, 2000.
73. Lieu, 2004, p60. Chapter two provides a useful overview of the issues.
74. Jaffee, 2001, pp13ff.

them the things about himself in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Similarly in the exchange between Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch:

> [30][Philip] asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" [31][The Eunuch] replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"... Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. (Acts 8:30-31, 35)

The Scriptures are, for the New Testament communities, the basis upon which they construct their understanding of Christ. There is no need to argue for the authority of these Scriptures as it is a given. The role of the New Testament writings is to provide the correct interpretative lens through which the Old Testament should be viewed, a process which can already be seen at work in the dialogue between Philip and the Eunuch. Justin's *Dialogue* provides a more sustained dialogue, but seeks the same end.

An example of this desired continuity can be found in the language used in some of the New Testament writings. In the same way that the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls evokes a 'biblical' style, it has been noted that the Greek of the Fourth Gospel is reminiscent of the Greek used in the translations of the day and also in the synagogues.[75]

All of this is to suggest that within Second Temple Judaism there arose around "the scriptures" (τὰς γραφάς) communities of interpretation. Something of this can be seen, for example, in the life of the synagogues and also in the disputes between Jesus and "The Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) in John's Gospel. Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι "search the scriptures" (5:39) yet fail to find in them the interpretation which is held by Christ. In a later debate amongst the chief priests and Pharisees concerning Christ, Nicodemus is asked: "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee." (7:52).[76]

Conflicts arose between these communities as they were largely employing the same

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75. Evans, 1993, p149.
76. Evans, 1993, p113.

texts as their basis and, ultimately, these communities clashed over the content and extent of what is canon, i.e. the textual basis for the community.[77] There are examples of this within the Gospels where disputes are reflected between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, who differ as to the extent of what is scripture and what, if any, role an oral tradition plays. The community which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls represents another such community whose textual basis has a significant overlap with others who are contemporary to it, but with differences which produce a community with tightly defined boundaries.

A further, and in this period important, distinction within textual communities is that of language. As will be seen, the question of whether the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek versions of the Jewish scriptures lie at the heart of a textual community will create significantly different outcomes. The role of the Greek Scriptures in the nascent church will be discussed in more detail below, but for now it is enough to note that Justin, referring to the texts which form the scriptural basis for early Christianity, writes:

> They [the Greek translation of the Scriptures] are also in the possession of all Jews throughout the world; but they, though they read, do not understand what is said, but count us foes and enemies; and, like yourselves, they kill and punish us whenever they have the power, as you can well believe.[78]

Ireneaus also defends the text of the Greek scriptures over the Hebrew scriptures and draws upon the Letter Of Aristeas, ending his discussion with an assertion of the divine inspiration of the translation:

> But when they came together in the same place before Ptolemy, and each of them compared his own interpretation with that of every other, God was indeed glorified, and the Scriptures were acknowledged as truly divine. For all of them read out the common translation [which they had prepared] in the very same words and the very same names, from beginning to end, s*o that even the Gentiles present perceived that the Scriptures had been interpreted by the inspiration of God*.[79]

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77. As will be discussed below, in the debate with Trypho Justin expends some energy in defence of the Greek Jewish Scriptures over and against the Hebrew.
78. *1 Apol.* 31. It is worth noting at this point that it is probable that Justin is working from texts that were circulating amongst the Christian community as well as the standard Greek texts of the day which would be found in the Synagogues. See Skarsaune, 1987, Skarsaune, 2007.
79. *Haer.* 3, 21.2. Emphasis mine.

Ireneaus's comments come within the context of a discussion on Isaiah 7:14, for which the Greek text ('virgin') is more prophetically profound than the Hebrew ('young woman'). However it is not only the early Christians who defend the Greek Scriptures, which form an important part of the the textual basis for their community, but also the Greek speaking Jews who similarly relied upon it. So it is that Philo relates a story similar to that of Aristeas' and even writes of an annual commemorative festival which, in his day, still took place to celebrate the translation.[80]

The choices of texts for a particular community represent the "shared viewpoint" of that community[81] and the interplay of those texts serves to reinforce that viewpoint. Hence it is that texts exist in different manners, with the same text having diverse meanings depending on whether it is alone or part of a larger collection.[82] The textual community provides the framework for the response of the reader. Although he is writing of a later community, Porter's comments below might equally be said to apply to the textual communities of the Second Temple period:

> Intertextuality suggests that the proper focus of audience analysis is not the audience as receivers per se, but the intertext of the discourse community. Instead of collecting demographic data about age, educational level, and social status, the writer might instead ask questions about the intertext: What are the conventional presuppositions of this community? In what forums do they assemble? What are the methodological assumptions? What is considered 'evidence', 'valid argument', and 'proof'?[83]

The texts at the heart of the communities which produced the Gospels will be discussed below. For now it is enough to note that one would expect the Christian community - sharing as it does a similar textual basis with other Second Temple communities - to reflect the constructed (meta-)narratives reflected within the apocryphal writings[84] but also to offer different interpretations of them. An example

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80. *Moses* 2.25-44
81. Neusner, 2004, p51.
82. Neusner, 2004, p51.
83. Porter, 1986, p43f.
84. One might also see similarities of themes within the Pseudepigraphal literature. However, it is not always clear to what extent the contents of such writing were known outside their respective communities and care needs to be taken in proposing links. That some New Testament authors had knowledge of some Pseudepigraphal books is clear from the use of Enoch and the Assumption of Moses, but this does not imply a

of this, and one whose influence is evident within the Fourth Gospel at least, is the narrative of Wisdom which finds far greater expression within the apocryphal writings than in what develops as the Hebrew canon.

As will be argued, this is particularly the case in the Gospel of John which has, in recent years, been portrayed by most as part of an engagement with the synagogue by that Gospel's community.[85] This can fruitfully be understood as a conflict between two communities over the correct interpretation of the texts which they have in common. A family squabble. That these disputes resulted in those who "confessed Jesus to be the Messiah" being "put out of the synagogue" should not be surprising as these textual communities create themselves as social entities.[86] When a textual community develops, then one would expect to find that community operating as a relatively closed social group and when a clash over hermeneutics occurs then the 'other' is defined out. In a widely used definition of textual communities, Stock states that such a community is: 'a group that arises somewhere in the interstices between the imposition of the written word and the articulation of a certain type of social organization. It is an interpretative community, but it is also a social entity'.[87] Tellingly, he continues: "[a]mong the members, solidarity prevails, with the outside, separation". There is a bond of common interpretation which transcends the texts themselves and the social process is important within the formation of the community.

It should be noted that the orality of Second Temple culture, and the way in which texts were read aloud and internalized by the hearer would overcome any objections

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knowledge of all that has passed down to us.

85. Something commented on by Lieu, 2004, p41. This may suggest that the Johannine community is from the synagogue and well versed in the meta-narratives of that community and proto-Targummic material.

86. Neusner notes that the "upshot of defining a textual community ... is not hermeneutical, since at issue is not the reading and interpretation of texts but their social utility, their status as cultural indicators". Neusner, 2004, p51.

87. Stock, 1996, p150. Although the notion of textual communities is one which arises in the study of Mediaeval communities, Stock argues it is applicable to the Second Temple period, hence the title of this chapter 'Textual Communities: Judaism, Christianity, and the Definitional Problem'.

to illiteracy undermining the existence of textual communities.[88] Even if members have not read the text, their participation in the group's activities provides education and access.[89] An example of this, which is contemporary with nascent Christianity, would be the mob which arose after a Roman officer seized a Torah scroll in 48AD. Josephus writes:

> Now there followed after this another calamity ... Now here it was that a certain soldier, finding the sacred book of the law, tore it to pieces, and threw it into the fire. Hereupon the Jews were in great disorder, as if their whole country were in a flame...[90]

Whereas one would expect a low level of literacy within the population who congregated, it is clear that an attack on the text at the heart of a community would bring with it a heated response, even from those who were illiterate.[91] Moreover, Thatcher has demonstrated the applicability of the Textual Community model to first-century Palestine[92] and his article serves to illustrate the role of texts (Thatcher considers Josephus' *War*) in the defining of borders of communities and, ultimately, what is perceived as heresy and what is orthodox.

A major benefit in considering community dynamics is that it enables the discussion of the influence of late Second Temple Judaism on nascent Christianity to consider a wider range of influences than can be found by consideration of documentary links alone. As Porter noted in 1997, there is little by way of a broadly accepted methodology in quite how one proves the presence of one document behind another. So it is that one scholar's allusion is another scholar's echo. The proliferation of language used to describe the phenomenon is bewildering and, in some cases, misleading. Porter's list of terms used in this exercise (which he acknowledges is not exhaustive) succinctly makes the point and bears reproducing:

> citation, direct quotation, formal quotation, indirect quotation, allusive quotation, allusion (whether conscious or unconscious), paraphrase, exegesis (such as inner-biblical exegesis), midrash, typology, reminiscence, echo (whether conscious or unconscious), intertextuality, influence (either direct or indirect), and even tradition,

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88. Lieu, 2004, pp29ff.
89. Wertsch, 2002, p28.
90. *J.W.* 2.12.2
91. Hezser, 2001, pp195ff. Here she relies upon Thatcher, 1998
92. Thatcher, 1998.

among other terms.[93]

Clearly documentary influence is an important aspect in the consideration of the birth of any movement, but it is only one such influence. The approach of textual communities allows for not only the influence of earlier texts, but also what may be best described as the influence of meta-narratives. It is these meta-narratives which, when combined with pre-existing material which is understood as 'scriptural', produces the new texts around which the communities cohere. The resulting texts may well betray evidence of the earlier 'scriptures' which have influenced it, but equally there will be much which will be the product of a shared background between community and reader.[94]

This aspect is especially important for the task at hand since there is no explicit quotation within Mark and John of a theophany. Whilst it will be demonstrated that there is plenty which makes such a link, there is a lack of citation formulae or complete quotes. It would be possible to come up with a list of criteria of what constitutes, say, an allusion or to adapt a list such as the one produced by Hays.[95] However, there is always the danger that such things become overly subjective and that rules can be formed which produce the desired result rather than being sensitive to the context of the community which produced the text. It is safer to sketch the background to the textual community and seek the influence of that background.

b) Re-interpreting the Past

The formation of the books comprising the Old Testament has been described as "reifying a particular 'memory' of the past and interpretation for the future".[96] This process itself can be viewed as the work of a Textual Community (often identified as the Deuteronomists) and any such process inevitably leads to the loss of some traditions as others are given greater privilege.

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93. Porter, 1997, p80.
94. The work of reader-response critics have highlighted the importance of pre-suppositions that the reader brings to a texts.
95. See, for example, Hays, 1993, pp29ff.
96. Lieu, 2004, p32.

It would not be unreasonable to view the New Testament communities as taking part in a similar process. Certainly, the volume of writings which have come down to us from this period bears witness to the widespread literary activity which preceded and accompanied the writing of the New Testament. The process of compilation of the Gospels seek to invest the 'reified' memory with a particular (in this case Christological) significance. If the Jews and the Gospel communities share a common core textual memory, then it is in the telling of this memory that they clash. The event of Christ has shaped the interpretation of the core texts which in turn informs their understanding of Christ, in an almost cyclical nature.

Lieu, writing of this process, states: "Scripture needs to be properly understood, and it is the certainties of the present that define correct understanding; yet Scripture is also perceived as an independent witness and source of self-understanding".[97] If the Christians, or any post-exilic Jewish grouping for that matter, seek to portray themselves as the "true heirs" of the covenant(s) then it is imperative that they have an exegetical technique which allows them to appropriate that particular strand of the Biblical narrative.[98] The importance of this appropriation can be appreciated if one is to remember the credal role of passages such as Deuteronomy 26:1-11 where the actions of God are recalled,[99] and one can see Christian examples of this appropriation within Hebrews as well as Stephen's speech in Acts.

Thatcher has argued that the Fourth Gospel follows the pattern of the "rhetorical" model of motivation of authorship as opposed to the "archive" model.[100] Therefore, the Gospel does not seek simply to "archive" the oral traditions of the Johannine community but to set forth the understanding of the author, which "is more permanent and less negotiable".[101] It would, however, be preferable to locate the rhetorical method at a prior point, and to view the community themselves as

97. Lieu, 2004, p45. She adds, later, that "a 're-membered' history not only "explains the present but justifies it", p62.
98. Kee, 1993, p44.
99. Kee, 1993, p45.
100. Thatcher, 2005
101. Thatcher, 2005, p97.

producing a rhetorical retelling of Israel's past through the lens of the now revealed Christ.

The act of reinterpreting the past is not simply a matter of the compilation of texts, as the probable existence of a testimony book may suggest, but more a heightening of the interplay *between* those texts which points to a particular outcome. Neusner writes:

> In canonical Judaism, by contrast, events have no autonomous standing; events are not unique, each unto itself; events have no probative value on their own; and events are not to be strung together as explanations for how things are. In this writing, philosophical and scientific, rather than (in the aggregate) historical and theological, events form cases, along with a variety of other cases, making up lists of things that, in common, point to or prove one thing.[102]

For a textual community having its source within Second Temple Judaism one would expect more than a simple assembly of prophecies and types. In other words a reinterpretation of the core texts of the community (or, better, a re-understanding or re-membering) is not simply applying certain Old Testament texts to Christ but is more a new meta-narrative for Judaism, understood in the light of the Christ event. This is deep remembering not a surface one. The Old Testament is not being used to legitimate the understanding of the ministry of Christ in the New Testament, but rather the Old Testament is being viewed as containing the narrative of Christ which comes to fruition in the incarnation. As will be seen below, the grand narrative of Wisdom which develops in the intertestamental period is one such narrative which is understood to refer to Christ.

One further point should be made here. This Christian remembering serves not only to place a claim to the history of Israel, but also gives it the gloss of antiquity so important within the Hellenism of the day where "the prize went to whoever could demonstrate not only the antiquity of their civilization but also the debt to it of all other competitors".[103] This motivation can be seen by, for example, Justin's

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102. Neusner, 1991, p142.
103. Lieu, 2004, p72.

insistence that "Moses is more ancient than all the Greek writers".[104]

II. Scriptural Imagination and the Community

It is not uncommon to find 'midrash' evoked in connection with New Testament studies. However midrash is a word which has had to bear a wide range of meanings such that, as Neusner notes, "[i]t follows that for clear speech the word 'Midrash', standing by itself, bears no meaning".[105] Moreover, there is a risk of anachronism in reading later Rabbinic techniques back to earlier New Testament texts. There is some evidence that within the Second Temple period the task of *darash* was limited to the law (written and oral) and has an instructional bias.[106] Even if this is to be contested there is a significant difference in context, method and purpose between the Second Temple scribal culture with its centring on the Temple, and the post-Temple formulation of a Rabbinic culture and writings. The post-Temple period is one of consolidation of texts in terms of canon and textual versions, alongside the continuing development of an Oral Torah. This brought with it a change in relationship to the written texts which formed the basis of Second Temple speculation.[107]

That said, it is of course nonsense to suggest that Rabbinic midrash sprung fully formed from the womb of the post-Second Temple crisis. Rather it is a the culmination of techniques and traditions which would appear to have evolved from the monarchic period at least.[108] This process is something which can be seen in another Jewish Textual Community, namely nascent Christianity. Even if one is not as confident as Childs in applying the label 'midrash', he is surely right to label as "sorely deficient" any such study of the New Testament which does not tackle "midrash's working with a highly developed understanding of intertextual

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104. *1 Apol.* Chapter 44.
105. Neusner, 1987, p9.
106. Mandel, 2006.
107. Jaffee, 2001, in particular Chapter One.
108. Fishbane, 1985, p525.

referentiality".[109]

This way of reading scriptural texts is something which Sabin, following Fishbane, has suggested is best understood as theological "imagination".[110] The benefit of this kind of analysis is that it transcends a set of exegetical rules or techniques whilst at the same time providing them with some inner and outer coherence. Childs has drawn attention to a similar understanding in the work of Boyarin and Kugel and his description of this is useful here:

> A major emphasis of two of these scholars ... is to describe midrash as a way of reading the Bible according to a radical intertextual manner, assuming it to be the authoritative Scriptures of Judaism. In opposition to the hermeneutical model of the historical critical method, which postulates that the original text was clear and transparent before its subsequent distortion through the passage of time, midrash assumes that the meaning of the original biblical text was often hidden and ambiguous, and that its truth is only later revealed through continual interpretation.[111]

This form of exegesis is the norm within the Judaism of late antiquity and it has been suggested that evidence of it can be found within the Hebrew scriptures themselves[112] as well as the development of the 'Oral Torah' after Ezra.[113] Some have argued that this method can be seen in the works of the prophets,[114] and certainly the work of the redaction critics upon Isaiah suggests something very similar at work there. Moreover, there is an increasing awareness that this type of imagination is at work within the New Testament[115] and it is easy to view this as the formative process of Textual Communities as outlined above. Matthew is the most commented upon exponent of this and serves as an example of how an early Christian community read "*the verses of ancient Israel's Scriptures in light of their meaning in the life and teachings of Jesus*".[116]

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109. Childs, 2003, p181.
110. Sabin, 2002, pp13ff.
111. Childs, 2003, p181. He has in mind Boyarin, 1990 and Kugel, 1985.
112. See, for example, the Deuteronomic retelling of the events of the Exodus.
113. Sabin, 2002, p12.
114. e.g.Kugel, 1985.
115. For example Sabin notes that Kugel includes New Testament texts as evidence for the Jewish exegetical method in his *The Bible As It Was* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). Sabin, 2002, p22.
116. Neusner, 1987, p39. Emphasis his. See also Gundry's work on Matthew.

a) Scripture and Community

The interplay between scripture and community within the Second Temple period has two facets which it would be wise to distinguish: the reception of Scripture and its re-application.

Within the largely oral culture of antiquity, the reception of scripture was not normally a private affair but was heard within a communal context. The scripture was 'performed' by the scribe who had committed great portions of the text to memory, and the variances and interpretative comments which accompanied such a performance would, for the hearer, form part of the text. The varying textual traditions that survive for individual books serve to illustrate this process. This orality is an important factor in the transmission of 'the Scriptures', and constitutes a significant factor in the understanding of the communal nature of texts in the period.[117] "The book was the message heard, grasped as the restoration to speech of the original message", writes Jaffee.[118] Since the authority of the text lies in its original oral transmission to the prophet or author, the performance of this text 're-presents' this authority.

This process highlights the importance of the community's oral tradition in the understanding of an existing text.[119] This process, however, also leads to the formation of new texts - the reapplication of an existing tradition into a new context. This is the work of the Textual Community in the reapplication and re-imagining of the text.[120] Allusions and intertextuality ensure that the new text operates as a new perception of the old text, a re-reading of an established tradition or narrative. This relationship to the Jewish scriptures is crucial and the exegesis is thus, 'biblical'.[121]

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117. Jaffee, 2001, in particular Chapter One.
118. Jaffee, 2001, p27.
119. In his consideration of this phenomenon, Alexander has noted that non-biblical traditions and sources can form part of a "re-written" Bible. Alexander, 1988, p118.
120. "Scripture was not an ancient artefact for the people of Israel but a living word, accompanied by an oral tradition and scribal exegesis. The key question was not what such and such a text might have meant in its original setting, even if that could be reconstructed, but how the text was being interpreted in the first century.". Moyise, 2008, p306.
121. Neusner, 1987, pp9ff.

Sabin summarises this process: “the nature of Scripture is shown to be self-reflexive, constantly echoing and reinterpreting itself”.[122]

This process sees the reapplication of existing texts and traditions to contemporary situations. For, say, Matthew to reapply the material so that it refers to Christ, is a logical part of this pattern. In fact one would *expect* to see something like it at work. It should be acknowledged, though, that to have a person as the re-interpretative lens is something that is unique to the treatment of the Jewish texts in the Gospels and cannot be found within any Rabbinic works within antiquity.[123]

Another commonly debated example of this process is the layering of contexts which is seen in Isaiah, where a shared prophetic message is re-spoken into a new manifestation of the community which received the words of First Isaiah. So it is that Childs et al can trace a redaction of First Isaiah in Second Isaiah.

The effect of all of this is that the interpreted text itself becomes part of scripture. By partaking of the waters of the original text it comes to be seen of as part of the scriptural writings of Judaism. The result of this for the Hebrew Bible is that it becomes a collection of material that reinterprets and reapplies central ideas and traditions.[124] The final formulation of the canon is, therefore, a means of calling a halt to this process or - better - of drawing a line.[125]

This imaginative retelling of scripture, often within an oral community, is the means by which the Biblical text is reapplied to the contemporary generation or, better, community. It is a process which is at play within the Hebrew Bible itself and which continues thereafter. The Biblical texts become dynamic: “a critical situation or

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122. Sabin, 2002, p14.
123. Neusner, 1987, p38.
124. On this, see Fishbane, 1985. A representative quote would be: “For it requires one to recognize, with the final tradent-teachers, that the Hebrew Bible is a variety of teachings and responses which each generation has added to its traditum, and that each successive layering of traditio is, inevitably, a reordering of the relative authority of the received traditions.” Fishbane, 1985, p440.
125. Fishbane, 1985, p18.

event was viewed through the lens of scripture; the meaning of scripture was 'reactualized' by the exegesis of the event".[126] A relevant example of this can be found in the Pseudepigraphal writings.

In considering this phenomenon, Fishbane draws a distinction between *traditum* and *traditio*, the first term referring to the content of a tradition and the latter to its transmission. Within inner-biblical exegesis it is the received Scripture which fulfils the role of the *traditum*, and one would see this at play within the textual community too.

b) The Pseudepigrapha

One finds ample examples of this interplay between community and text within the Pseudepigrapha, which serve both to illustrate and illuminate the points made above. It is clear that the exegetical techniques in these writings are distinct from the Midrashim and Targumim which post-date them,[127] whilst one might also find echoes of earlier techniques such as that of the portrayal of the return from Exile within Isaiah as a new Exodus which is discussed below. Moreover, there has been in recent years something of a rehabilitation of these texts with the realisation that their influence is not simply restricted to a fringe sect but they are known - to differing extents - to the multiple Judaisms of the late Second Temple period.

Charlesworth has provided five categories of Pseudepigraphal texts which serve to illustrate the exegetical techniques employed and, importantly for our purpose, how these texts relate to 'the scriptures'.[128] The first of these categories he calls "Inspiration" and contains those writings, such as the *Prayer of Manasseh*, where the author has drawn inspiration from the Old Testament. So it is that the author of the *Prayer* has utilised his imagination in explicating events described in 2 Chronicles 33:11-13. This imagination may be influenced by nonbiblical writings.

126. Sabin, 2002, p21.
127. Charlesworth, 1993, pp21ff.
128. Charlesworth, 1993, pp27ff.

In the next category, “Framework”, a particular biblical narrative is seen as paradigmatic. Therefore, the writer of 4 Ezra draws upon the ‘framework’ of the Babylonian conquest of Zion in describing the events of the Roman actions six hundred years on (3:1):

> In the thirtieth year after the downfall of the City I, Salathiel– [who am also Ezra]– was in Babylon, and as I lay upon my bed I was disquieted. ... and my mind was preoccupied with my thoughts; because I saw Sion’s desolation on the one hand (matched) with the abundant wealth of Babylon’s inhabitants on the other.

A similar phenomenon is at play in 2 Baruch and elsewhere.[129] Within the Canon, the theme of the Exodus is used as a framework for the hoped for return from Exile as put forth in Isaiah. Within the New Testament one can discern something of this method at play in Matthew’s use of the Mosaic theme in the opening chapters of his Gospel.

“Launching” describes the technique whereby a scene or portion of texts provides a launchpad for a piece of writing, the books of Enoch being the example *par excellence*. In these the brief mention of Enoch found in Genesis 5:23-24 provides the exegetical foundation for the material to be found in these Pseudepigraphal books as well as texts such as Jude. A similar figure is Melchizedek who, of course, makes an appearance in Hebrews.

Works which have limited relationship at best to a Biblical text fall into the “Inconsequential” category. Here can be found books such as the *Sybilline Oracles* which in places betray the influence of texts or tradition, but only occasionally. The *Treatise of Shem* and *Apocalypse of Adam* seem only to have borrowed names.

The final category is “Expansions” where the ‘gaps’ in Biblical stories are filled in, and retold so that narratives are ‘completed’. This neatly illustrates the exegetical techniques discussed earlier and serves to underline the centrality of the Biblical texts for these communities. Charlesworth produces a list of texts which operate in

129. Charlesworth gives the further examples of the Testament of Job, The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Testament of Abraham and the Testament of Moses.

this manner:[130]

Jubilees	Genesis 1:1 - Exodus 12:50
Martyrdom of Isaiah	1, 2 Kings
Joseph and Aseneth	Genesis 37-50
Life of Adam and Eve	Genesis 1-6
Pseudo-Philo	Genesis to 2 Samuel
Lives of the Prophets	Kings, Chronicles, Prophets
Ladder of Jacob	Genesis 28
4 Baruch	Jeremiah, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah
Jannes and Jambres	Exodus 7-8
History of the Rechabites	Jeremiah 35
Eldad and Modad	Numbers 11:26-29

So it is that "[i]t seems obvious that the text was considered divine, but the spirit for interpretation allowed the Jewish exegete to alter, ignore, expand, and even rewrite the sacred Scripture".[131] This is a point worth stressing, as it demonstrates that to seek a documentary relationship between texts is anachronistic. One should not expect one text to quote another, or for a neat or exegetically 'sound' (in a modernistic, historico-critical sense) treatment of texts. Rather, as has been discussed, the relationship between texts is one of influence and inspiration. It should also be noted that the point of this reworking of the Biblical texts is not to replace them, but rather to 'heighten' them.[132]

c) Textual futures

The Christians, both as individual communities and as a sect of Judaism, created from the texts of Judaism a new understanding of their history, which was formed by the events of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Their re-appraisal of the past in the light of these events was foundational in their understanding of their future, and created an expectation and understanding which became Christianity. This was one possible future for the texts of Second Temple Judaism. Another, more short-lived, future was that propounded by the community by the Dead Sea. Yet another

130. Charlesworth, 1993, p39.
131. Charlesworth, 1993, p39.
132. Charlesworth, 1993, p40.

was Rabbinic Judaism.

Within the Gospels one can see the debates, commonly between Christ and his interlocutors, regarding the interpretation of the Scriptures. Given the nature of textual communities this is unsurprising. However, what is also at work is not only a re-interpretation of texts but also a re-understanding of history. The late Second Temple period was a succession of upheavals, and Charlesworth is surely right to highlight the fact that these re-interpretations are "sociologically conditioned".[133]

In the sections which follow, the texts which informed this debate will be identified and considered, as well as the hopes and aspirations (in as far as we can know them) of Second Temple Judaism. There will also be a consideration of the relation of Christianity (however understood) to the more mainstream Judaism of the day.

This process of re-interpretation and re-understanding is a creative one, within the bounds of the community belief. The meaning of texts can shift and have a different referent to that held within the more mainstream community.[134] Matthew's treatment of Isaiah is a case in point here, and this process can also be seen in Acts 8:30f:

> [30]So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" [31]He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" ... [34]The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" [35]Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

It will be argued below that this process is also at work within the portrayal of the incarnation. In the theme of theophany to be found within the Jewish Scriptures and other writings, the nascent Christian community had something against which to

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133. Charlesworth, 1993, p41. Kee, 1993, p44.

134. This, clearly, is a challenge to the view that a text can only have one fixed meaning. The historical-critical method has expended much energy in seeking the mind of the original author. More recent literary methods have brought some refocussing in this area with a growing appreciation that texts may be reinterpreted. Thus Moyise: "A citation is a pointer to a previous context (e.g. the Exodus) or subsequent contexts (e.g. Isaiah's use of Exodus imagery). How these 'voices' interact when they are transposed into a further context (e.g. Mark's Gospel) is bound to be complex and understood differently by different readers". Moyise, 2006, pp25ff.

understand the incarnation. The incarnation is to a different degree - after all, the Word takes flesh - but the background of understandings as to theophanies forms an important aspect of the developing doctrine of the incarnation.

III. Judaism and Christianity

Since there will be a consideration of John's Gospel below, it would be wise to consider the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in light of the comment in John 9:22 that the "Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue". Should that give pause to anyone seeking to portray the development of Christology against the background of Second-Temple Judaism?

In the matter of the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity, much has been written with the language of supercession being largely abandoned in favour of a controlling metaphor of the "partings of the ways". As has been pointed out both views reflect an underlying theological desire[135] and can tend to oversimplify the experience of those living during the time under reconstruction,[136] which is a point accepted by Dunn in the second edition of his work on this issue.[137] One must also acknowledge the fact that for the early church, as evidenced by Justin Martyr and Melito of Sardis, the parting(s) of the ways model would be alien.[138] It is a later way of understanding a process which would in all probability have looked very different from within.

As with any historical consideration of the religious map within the *Pax Romana*, it must be accepted that a reification of religious beliefs into religious movements is a tricky business. Even if one is to follow Hurtado's example and seek to identify beliefs through the lens of worship it has to be acknowledged that praxis, historical categories, theological beliefs and social patterns (let alone boundaries) rarely if ever

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135. For the parting(s) model is "driven by a theological need to maintain the unity between Israel and the church". Lieu, 1994, p119.
136. e.g. by Lieu, 1994.
137. Dunn, 2006, pxii.
138. Lieu, 1994, p105.

coalesce.[139] Both models of supercession and parting(s) are also prone to suggest that there is such a thing as a single Judaism or even Christianity whereas all the data surveyed is of necessity relative to a single geographical or theological plateau.[140] A more graded picture needs to be acknowledged before any overarching models can be constructed.

Given all this, it would seem sensible to seek for the germ of New Testament ideas in the Jewish literature of the day, rather than hunt amongst the Greeks or (maybe anachronistically) amongst the Gnostics. Is there evidence for a pre-Christian Jewish theology which can feasibly be seen as a precursor to, say, the Logos theology of the John's Prologue? This is to differ to some degree from Dunn who puts the question thus: "To what extent does the understanding of the Logos, the Word of God, in pre-Christian Hellenistic Judaism throw light on and explain the language and ideas of John 1.1-18?".[141] As will be seen there is some evidence of this view within Aramaic Judaism too.

a) Yavneh, Minim and the Synagogue

Within twentieth century scholarship the primary objection to this view, especially when dealing with the Gospel of John, has been the events purported to have taken place at Yavneh. Traditionally, four 'official' actions are held to arise from Yavneh which form an anti-Christian policy:[142]

i. anti-Christian letters are circulated;
ii. Jewish Christians are "banned";
iii. the reading of "heretical books" is forbidden;
iv. the Birkat ha-Minim is composed.

However, the scholarly stance towards Jamnia has undergone a significant revision in recent years for a number of reasons. There is a growing awareness that Christianity

139. Lieu, 1994, p109.
140. Lieu, 1994, p108
141. Dunn, 1989, p216.
142. As cited in Katz, 1984, p44.

did not play as large a role in the development of Rabbinic Judaism post 70 as was once thought. Christianity was viewed as part of a wider problem, rather than *sui generis*, and was one of the competing Judaisms within the rethinking of Judaism occasioned by the destruction of the temple. That is not to say that Christianity was irrelevant to those at Yavneh, but it is to say that it should be placed within its context alongside other Jewish groups, such as the apocalyptics and Hellenizers, who sought to interpret the meaning of the fall of the temple.[143] Moreover, there had been a tendency to grant to the Jamnian sages more influence than they in fact had.[144] As is all too often the case, history is written by the winners, in this instance the Rabbis, and to simply accept uncritically all that is written is to grant them rather more authority than was the case. It should also be noted that the earliest accounts of Yavneh are found in the Mishnah which gives them a date late in the second century.[145]

The efforts of those who have participated in various Quests for the Historical Jesus have shown that, if nothing else, there is a distance between the actions and sayings of Jesus and the accounts of those activities. If the Gospels can be viewed as documents of the Early Church which reflect its biases, then the same should be said for the Mishnah and Tosefta with regard to Rabbinic Judaism. Thus Boyarin: "'Yavneh' is largely a legend (or better, a set of synoptic legends) whose function was to establish the Palestinian rabbinic center as hegemonic".[146] Katz concludes that the theories of separation at Yavneh are built on slim evidence indeed.[147]

After all, it is not clear that Christianity at that time was perceived as a great threat. There are no clear references to Jesus in the Mishnah, and the intimations within the Tosefta and some baraitot have not yielded any scholarly consensus as to their

143. Neusner, 1966, p155ff, Wilson, 1995, p181.
144. Wilson, 1995, pp180-181.
145. Boyarin, 2001b, p429.
146. Boyarin, 2001b, p437.
147. He writes: "there was no official anti-Christian policy at Yavneh or elsewhere before the Bar Kochba revolt and no total separation between Jews and Christians before (if not immediately after?) the Bar Kochba revolt." See Katz, 1984.

referent.[148]

There have been some who have gone further and opposed completely the received wisdom and suggest that, drawing upon Patristic evidence, the problem faced by the Johannine community was not expulsion but rather the welcome offered to Gentile Christians by the synagogue.[149] In this view, the expulsion narratives in the Gospel are designed to discourage Christians from associating with synagogues which were all too welcoming. This was certainly a problem some centuries after such a supposed expulsion occurred as Chrysostom, writing in the late fourth century, illustrates:

> Since there are some who think of the synagogue as a holy place, I must say a few words to them. Why do you reverence that place? Must you not despise it, hold it in abomination, run away from it? They answer that the Law and the books of the prophets are kept there. What is this? Will any place where these books are be a holy place? By no means! This is the reason above all others why I hate the synagogue and abhor it. They have the prophets but do not believe them; they read the sacred writings but reject their witness-and this is a mark of men guilty of the greatest outrage.[150]

One must proceed with caution as Patristic evidence is inevitably later, but there is enough within this view to at least challenge the assumption that the expulsion was initiated by the Jews.

b) The Birkhat ha-Minim

The *birkhat* itself has had a considerable influence upon twentieth century New Testament scholarship, especially when taken in conjunction with the banishing from the Synagogue (ἀποσυνάγωγος) of John 9:22, 12:42 and 16:2.[151] Along with the revision of the role and influence of any Council that may have taken place at Yavneh, the Birkhat ha-Minim itself is increasingly being viewed as a "red herring"[152]. The rabbinic account of it is best thought of as a "retrospective,

148. Katz, 1984, p47.
149. See Conway, 2002, pp498-493 for a helpful summary.
150. Adv. Jud. I.V.2. See also Kinzig, 1991; Wilson, 1995.
151. See, for example, J Louis Martyn's History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel.
152. Meeks, 1985, pp102-3. cited in Wilson, 1995,p 180.

punctilliar summary of what was in reality a lengthy process".[153]

The Mishnah makes no mention of the 'blessing' and the first mention is made in the Tosefta, dating most probably a century later.[154] Even here, it is noted that the citation is "in a rhetorical form indicating that it is a novum in fact"[155] and in any case represents a late attestation. Yet it represents the earliest evidence for the term *minim* referring to Christians some two centuries after the fact.[156]

Within Palestinian rabbinic literature, *minim* refers to Jewish heretics (which would include Jewish-Christians) and not Gentiles.[157] It is likely, given the varieties of Judaism at this time, that any such curse would not have one group alone in its sights, but rather all 'heretics'.[158] It is simply not possible to define who the *minim* were with any certainty[159] and it is likely that the term had more than one party in its targets, in the same way as 'heresy' can act as a catch-all word.

Motyer makes a related point: "since the curse worked by self-exclusion rather than by expulsion (so that it would only bar from the synagogue those who recognised themselves as 'minim'), it must have functioned more as exhortation to Jews generally than as a specific means of social exclusion"[160]. To speak of an expulsion would be inappropriate.

Given all the foregoing, it would be dangerous to seek to suggest a sharp division between Johannine theology and Judaism based on the the supposed events of Yavneh alone. In any case, a split such as suggested by some would not necessitate an absolute divergence in theology. It is not uncommon for groups that have been

153. Wilson, 1995, p181.
154. Neusner, 1995, p121
155. Boyarin, 2001b, p429.
156. Boyarin, 2001b, p430.
157. Boyarin, 2001b, p430.
158. Wilson, 1995, p180.
159. Motyer, 1997, p93. A view he calls a "healthy consensus".
160. Motyer, 1997, p93.

rejected by the 'other' to cling more closely to their theology in the belief that they are the guardians of what is right. A divergence of community would still allow for an influence from Judaism within the Gospels and the intertextuality of the Gospels with wider Judaism (i.e. not simply the Rabinnic Judaism which came to dominance).

c) The importance of continuity

In all of this it is important to acknowledge that in the eyes of the church reflected in the New Testament there is a desire to show a strong continuity with Judaism as understood in its broadest sense. There is undoubtedly an engagement with the infighting within Judaism - witness the debates with Saducees and Pharisees - but to simply interpret this as a rejection of Judaism *per se* is to do the Early Church a disservice. Jesus is understood as the Messiah, a thoroughly Jewish figure who is crucified under the ironic label "King of the Jews".

This concern for continuity sits neatly within the wider Hellenic world for whom antiquity was important, a view nicely illustrated by Suetonius' well known dismissal of Christians as "a class of men given to a new and wicked superstition".[161] It is therefore not surprising to find Christian writers arguing for the antiquity of the Jewish scriptures over and against the older Greek philosophers in order to establish their primacy. For example, the insistence upon antiquity within Justin's writings is evidenced by his desire to place Moses within antiquity and certainly before the writers of the Greek culture which formed his cultural backdrop. Plato, for example, is portrayed as borrowing from the much earlier Moses ("...Plato, when he says, "The blame is his who chooses, and God is blameless," took this from the prophet Moses and uttered it. For Moses is more ancient than all the Greek writers".[162]) and Justin is keen to suggest that Jesus' coming was anticipated from antiquity ("And He was predicted before He appeared, first 5000 years before, and again 3000, then 2000, then 1000, and yet again 800; for in the succession of generations prophets after prophets arose".[163]). Moreover, for Justin Christ as the Word was the inspiration of,

161. *Nero* xvi.2.
162. *1 Apol.* 44
163. *1 Apol.* 31

amongst others, Socrates[164] and therefore greater than those who 'partook' of him. The 'appropriation' of the Jewish Scriptures by the Christians brought with it the halo of antiquity.

In this connection, prophecy is an important tool for the early Christian for it enables the events surrounding the life of Christ to be viewed from an ancient standpoint. For example, in Justin's *Dialogue* there is a concerted effort to show that the claims being made for Christ are no novelty, but simply a fulfilment of prophecies which are firmly part of the Jewish texts. Indeed Justin mainly restricts himself to the writings of Moses, who we have seen happily predates the Greek philosophers. Of course, in Justin's case, the proof from prophecy was a key element in his conversion *(Dial. 7)*.

To return to the New Testament, this concern for continuity with the Jewish Scriptures can be seen in the studied application of prophecy to Christ in Matthew's Gospel as well as Paul who is concerned to show that the death and resurrection of Jesus is "according to the Scriptures" (2 Corinthians 15:3). Earlier, he has argued "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets". (Acts 24:14)

Better then not to view Christianity as being opposed to Judaism, a rather reductionist view, but better to see Christianity as one Judaism struggling for supremacy within an increasingly fragmented religious scene.

IV. The Scriptures?

Given the interplay between the community and the text, it would seem wise to establish the texts (or scriptures) around which the Early Christians gathered and from which they gained their authority. Within the West, the MT has held sway within the Christian scriptures in terms of both canon and content for many centuries, and it has its influence upon New Testament scholarship such that other versions,

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164. *1 Apol.* 56

such as in Greek or Aramaic, are broadly undervalued.[165]

This tendency is exacerbated by the Protestant reliance upon the MT for the purposes of translation and canon. One might question the theologico-political motives of the reformers, but the burgeoning Renaissance made the call "*ad fontes*" nigh on irresistible. Thus, the "wunderkind Philipp Melanchthon" goes to the sources of the Greek New Testament and Greek classics side by side - a 'sacred philology'[166]. Hebrew, too, becomes an object of study with the *De rudimentis hebraicus* of Reuchlin being published in 1506. That the scholars of the age, including Reuchlin, had to rely upon Jewish scholars for their knowledge[167] goes to show the lack of attention given to Hebrew in prior centuries.

The return *ad fontes* to the Hebrew Old Testament also served to bolster the theological concerns the reformers had with the Apocrypha, a view reflected in Luther's Bible.

However, assumptions have been challenged: is there such a thing as an original text from which all later texts evolve? The historico-critical method has expended much energy on the reconstruction of an ur-text and the assumption has been that it is possible to discern a documentary evolution (even if quite what that evolution is has been debated). However, the discoveries of documents during the last half of the twentieth century have painted a somewhat different picture, with a variety of text families or text traditions emerging. So, for example, Müller identifies three groupings: the 'proto-Masoretic', the Septuagint/Alexandrian, and Samaritan Pentateuch traditions.[168] These three (and one might wish to identify more) represent differing Textual Communities which surrounded the Jewish meta-narrative which in turn produce their own writings.

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165. For a discussion of this, see McLay, 2003.
166. Pelikan, 1997, p53.
167. Pelikan, 1997, p60.See also Karpman, 1967.
168. Müller, 1996, p34.

The search for an ur-text has also been brought into question by the presence of differing texts within the Dead Sea Scrolls,[169] which has furthermore undermined any assumption that the Masoretic Text contains a form of Scriptures considered to be authoritative for all of Second Temple Judaism. Tov comments that "Both the Hebrew and Greek texts from Qumran thus reflect a community which practiced openness at the textual level, without being tied down to MT ".[170] One might also wonder with Lieu, whether the citations in John or Paul reflect variant Greek translations which in turn reflect this textual fluidity.[171]

The issue, though, is this: given that the New Testament authors made great use of Greek translations of the Old Testament (a practice which continued long into the Early Church), is it not more appropriate to see these Greek translation as τὰς γραφάς? If Paul's implied readers are "broadly familiar with the Greek text of the Jewish Scriptures",[172] should not the New Testament exegete be the same?

a) The Greek Jewish Scriptures and the Church

In 1946, Harry Orlinsky concluded his article on the Septuagint with these words:

> These remarks, it is hoped, may indicate something of the tremendous amount of significant and useful work yet to be done in the analysis of the most important translation of the Old Testament which has ever been made, the Septuagint, together with its daughter versions.[173]

Unfortunately for Orlinksy, the next year saw the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and his call was never heeded as there was now early *Hebrew* witness to the Hebrew

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169. As Charlesworth tellingly comments: "A study of the Qumranic biblical text types awakened us to the reality that the adjective 'Septuagintal' must no longer be used to refer to Greek variants, but may also refer to very early Hebrew traditions that are not reflected in the Biblica Hebraica"Charlesworth, 1993, p22.
170. Tov, 2001a, pp10-11. He also writes: "The Hebrew manuscripts from the Judean Desert reflect a variety of textual forms, among them proto-Masoretic texts, while those of the later sites of Naḥal Ḥever, Wadi Sdeir, Murabba'at, and Naḥal Ṣe'elim (as well as the earlier site of Masada) exclusively reflect the proto-Masoretic texts (also named proto-rabbinic texts) later to be contained in MT. To be precise, the texts from the sites other than Qumran are closer to the medieval text than the Qumran proto-Masoretic texts".
171. Lieu, 2004, p38.
172. Stanley, 1999, p143.
173. Orlinsky, 1946, p34.

Bible.

So what is left for the Greek Scriptures? If seen as solely a text-critical aid in the recovery of the original Hebrew Bible (if there was such a thing), then its use is diminished by the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has a greater use if seen as a pointer to the existence of a number of textual traditions extant within Judaism, both in its Greek form as well as its *Vorlage.*[174] In addition it gives evidence for early exegesis,[175] as is unavoidable in any translation.

However, there is more fundamental reason for granting the Greek translation a higher status than commonly given. The fact that the New Testament writers are conversant with the Greek texts, with their additions, would suggest that this is precisely the background against which the New Testament should be interpreted. Even if the 1,000 year leap to the MT is mitigated somewhat by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the burden of proof is on those who would try to show that the MT *Vorlage* represents the textual tradition known to the New Testament.

McLay shows three major ways in which the Greek scriptures had their influence upon the New Testament by investigating:-

> (1) the influence of the vocabulary of the LXX on the NT; (2) citations from the LXX employed by the NT writers; and (3) evidence that the reading of the LXX affected the theology of the NT writers.[176]

One only has to consider the influence of the King James Version, with its variations from more recent translations in terms of manuscript sources and language, to gain an impression of how the use of the Greek scriptures would have its affect upon the theology and understanding of the New Testament writers and the Early Church. An insistence upon the MT, or even the underlying Hebrew Bible of the day, would be anachronistic. Both the text and extent of what were considered Scriptures by the New Testament writers should be decoupled from the proto-MT, especially given that

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174. Tov, 2001b, p122, p142.
175. Tov, 2001b, p134.
176. McLay, 2003, p144. See pp144ff for his outworking of these three lines of inquiry.

it really is not possible to assert that the Hebrew canon was dealt with at any purported Council at Yavneh.[177] Even if one were to doggedly insist on a Hebrew Old Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown evidence of variant *Hebrew* textual traditions at that time, such that one could not with absolute confidence identify what was the text of scripture for the New Testament writers.

One might object that Greek texts which have been recovered over the past half century have showed differing amounts of 'Hebraizing' towards the proto-Masoretic Text.[178] The Kaige recension may well be one such revision. This would suggest that a high status was accorded to the proto-MT by those who carried out such revisions, but it would be dangerous to assume that what is the case for some camps is the case for all communities. Certainly, the early Christian community relied upon Septuagintal readings from which to develop doctrinal stances (Matthew's use of Isaiah, for example). What is likely is that the proto-Rabbinic strand of Judaism was more concerned with the Hebrew/proto-Masoretic strand. What is less likely is that this concern was shared by all Judaism.

One should not simply imagine that the forming of the Hebrew canon itself was a theologically neutral event. The assimilation of the Greek Scriptures by the Christian community, especially given its Christological interpretation, is a process which would not be viewed as neutral. Certainly by the time of Justin, the Greek Scriptures were being questioned by the Jews[179] and there is evidence that the Christians were preserving, perhaps in testimony books, Greek renderings of the Scripture which were useful to them (even if they diverged from the Greek Scriptures).[180] This trend can also be found at sites other than Qumran which "represent Jewish nationalistic circles which adhered only to the proto-rabbinic (proto-Masoretic) text in Hebrew and the Jewish revisions of the Greek Scriptures towards that Hebrew text".[181]

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177. Aune, 1991.
178. Tov, 2001a, especially pp10-11.
179. Wilson, 1995, p263.
180. Wilson, 1995, p274. Hengel concludes that "Even the final closing of the Hebrew canon by the Pharisaic teachers ... must be categorized in the final analysis as 'anti-heretical', indeed anti-Christian". Hengel, Dienes & Biddle, 2002, p44.
181. Tov, 2001a, pp10-11.

For the purposes, therefore, of ascertaining how the Old Testament is used in forming an understanding of Christ, the Greek Jewish Scriptures are indispensable as they provide the interpretative lens through which the Old Testament was viewed.[182] Furthermore, a certain looseness to the canon should be acknowledged. Any attempt to reduce the canon to that contained within the Masoretic text alone would denude New Testament interpretation of its proper context.

However, one must also acknowledge a wider influence. True, the scriptures are used in their Greek translation but there is also a web of influences upon theological thought which reflect the Palestinian setting of the Gospels. There is certainly a growing awareness of the importance of Aramaic thought within the formulation of the Gospels[183], whether or not one holds to the theory of an Aramaic[184] substratum to John in terms of language[185] or even Matthew.[186] To write in one language does not preclude one from thinking in another. The Fourth Gospel certainly does have a "Semitic ring"[187] and the inscription evidence from Palestine prior to the sacking of the Temple, points towards a society where Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew co-existed.[188] So it is that even if one sees a knowledge and use of the Greek Scriptures, it should not be assumed that traditions contained in other languages are unknown. This is particularly the case for those Greek speaking Jews who worshipped within the synagogues.

The question therefore arises: should the Targumim be added to those textual traditions which may have their influence?

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182. Thus the Greek Scriptures are more than simply a means by which to reconstruct an original Hebrew text which, for many (e.g. Gentry, 2006), is the extent of their importance.
183. For a good, if now dated, survey see Fitzmeyer, 1980.
184. One has suggested a Hebrew substratum. Lachs, 1980.
185. The opinion of Barrett as regards Aramaicisms within the Prologue is worth noting: "There is no syntactical support for the view that the evangelist drew upon Aramaic sources in the prologue". Barrett, 1975, p 28.
186. cf Finley, 2006, pp135ff.
187. Barrett, 1975, p 59.
188. Gundry, 1964.

b) The Targumim

> The obvious advantage that the targums have here is that they are paraphrases of *Scripture*, the very Scripture that was available in the New Testament period.[189]

Evan's quote above, although rightly pointing to the influence of Targummatic material, is somewhat misleading in describing the Targumim as paraphrases. Rather, they are products of a particular community, a reactualization of the scriptural text and tradition. As we have seen, the Scriptures were not considered a closed book, but rather a living one. Hence in the Targumim we have evidence of the desire of Early Judaism to re-actualize texts.[190]

Discerning quite which period the Targumim derive from is a far from straightforward matter. There is evidence that they existed during the last decades before the fall of Jerusalem. For instance, the Babylonian Talmud records:

> I remember that R. Gamaliel, your grandfather, was standing on a high eminence on the Temple Mount, when the Book of Job in a Targumic version was brought before him, whereupon he said to the builder, "Bury it under the bricks." He [R. Gamaliel II] too gave orders, and they hid it. (Šabb. 115a).[191]

And, of course, the discovery of the Targum on Job at Qumran suggests that they existed at an earlier stage of the Second Temple Period.

The tradition recorded within the Talmud suggests that there is an unease with written (as opposed to oral) Targumim, and this might explain why, with the exception of the finds at Qumran, none survive from this period.[192]

What has become clear, as more discoveries have been made of Targumic material, is that there are a number of traditions[193] which reflect the evolution of the material over time culminating in the 'official' targum of Onqelos with its second century

189. Evans, 1993, p24.
190. Clarke, 1993, pp382ff.
191. Epstein & Slotki, 1935.
192. Instone-Brewer, 2008, p211.
193. Bowker, 1969, p15.

editing.[194] The emphasis on traditions is an important one as they reflect a continuity of thought[195] and sources which would pre-date by some time the final compilation of a piece of writing.[196] So it is that the written form of the Targumim postdate the oral traditions and represent different layers of interpretation[197] and may be called a 'progressive composition'.[198] This existence of a number of traditions is a further example of the pluriform nature of Judaism and points to the fact that a widely accepted, 'official' interpretation of the Scriptures was absent. The final editing of the Targumim to produce those seen as 'official' is a result of the fixing of a 'normative' Hebrew text which required a 'normative' Targum.[199]

Thus, even if a Targum cannot be given an early date - the official Targumim of Onqelos and Jonathan certainly post-date the New Testament by a distance - the tradition which they contain can be said to have a pre-history which in all likelihood stretches back to the New Testament periods. This is particularly the case for the Targumim on the Pentateuch (and Prophets) which were first used in the synagogues.[200]

Evans sets out four criteria which he suggests can be employed in order to assess the usefulness of texts comparable to the Gospels.[201]

1. *Antecedent Documentation*. Is there evidence that the traditions within the later source existed prior to it in some form?
2. *Contamination*. Does the later source show evidence of influence from the earlier Gospels such that an parallelism which is found is merely an echo of the Gospel?
3. *Provenance*. Does the text hail from the same textual milieu as the

194. Clarke, 1993, pp385ff, Instone-Brewer, 2008, p211.
195. Bowker, 1969, p14.
196. Clarke, 1993, pp386ff.
197. Clarke, 1993, p388.
198. Fraade, 1985, p393.
199. Clarke, 1993, p386.
200. Bowker, 1969, p15. Clarke, 1993, pp386ff.
201. Evans, 1993, pp18ff.

Gospels?

4. *Coherence*. Is there a "genuine and meaningful relationship of language and conceptuality"?

Whilst it must be acknowledged that at the distance of some two thousand years nothing can be said with absolute certainty, Evans' criteria do allow for texts which post-date the formulation of the Gospels to be used in a manner which would give protection against misleading anachronism. There is evidence that traditions encapsulated in the Targumim were extant within the first century[202] but there is "little evidence" of any contamination of Targumic thought by the New Testament.[203] The Targumim and the New Testament arise from the same textual milieu and the interpretations contained within them cohere.[204]

Neofiti is held by many to give such an early glimpse of this Targumic tradition within Palestine. Identified within the Vatican Library in 1956 by Diez Macho,[205] this sixteenth century manuscript was hailed by its discoverer as a complete copy of the pre-Christian Palestinian targum.[206] In making this claim, Diez Macho drew upon the earlier work of Kahle who had argued in his work on the fragments contained within the Genizah Fragments that the Palestinian Targumim predated the Mishnah within Israel and as such represent a window into the traditions of that period, if not the pre-Christian period. An important plank in Kahle's argument is the text of Exodus 22:4-5 from the Palestinian Targum which, he suggests, is contrary to the general tenor of the tradition codified in the Mishnah.[207] His conclusion is that this must therefore predate the Mishnah. An assumption which, as will be seen, has not

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202. See Evans, 1993, pp18-28 for examples of interpretations present in Targum Isaiah being present in the New Testament. See also the discussion below.
203. Evans, 1993, p114.
204. Evans, 1993, p114.
205. It had been discovered in 1949.
206. Bowker, 1969, p16.
207. Kahle, 1959, p123. He writes that the text in the Targum "is in clear contrast to all the official Jewish authorities and can be understood in an old Jewish text only on the assumption that it goes back to very ancient times, before the oral law codified in the Mishna had any validity. That such a translation is preserved in an old scroll of the Palestinian Targum is certainly of importance. It shows that written Targums must have existed in very ancient times".

gone unchallenged. However, Kahle feels that the fragment found at Genizah "... is material, the importance of which can scarcely be exaggerated".[208] In contrast to this, Targum Onqelos is of Babylonian provenance, Kahle argued, and was unknown within Palestine until 1,000 AD.

In dating his find of Neofiti, Diez Macho builds upon the work of Kahle and expands his argument to reflect the greater textual scope of his find as compared to the fragmentary nature of Kahle's texts.[209] He identifies a reference in Numbers 24:17 where Neofiti reads "and a king shall rise out of the house of Israel and a redeemer and a ruler out of the house of Israel" as opposed to the MT which has "a star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel". He concludes that Neofiti contains a Messianic tradition which identifies the 'star' from Jacob as 'a king' and, further, this lies behind the treatment of the verse in Matthew chapter two since, he argues, it is unlikely that later Rabbis would borrow a Christian tradition.[210] He also draws upon earlier work of Vermes[211] in which the latter posits a pre-Bar Kochba date for Neofiti, makes mention of various place names which indicate pre-Mishnah usage, notes that Neofiti does not contain the later data to be found in Pseudo-Jonathan, further notes the use of Greek and Latin terms within the codex, argues for a dependence of the New Testament on Neofiti when the former demonstrates similar ideas and posits a pre-Masoretic Text Vorlage for Neofiti.

There are a number of others who sit within what might be termed the optimistic school when it comes to Neofiti. McNamara is one, such that one has commented that "there appears to be no limit to Father McNamara's tendency to give an early date of composition to the Palestinian Targum"![212] Bowker places Neofiti 1 in the third century, but argues that it represents an early form of the Targum.[213] Earlier

208. Paul Kahle in 1959. Cited in McNamara, 1983, p213.
209. Diez Macho, 1960.
210. Diez Macho, 1960, p226.
211. Vermes, 1958.
212. Grossfeld, 1978, p118.
213. Bowker, 1969, p20. He comments: "since some of the interpretations in the recently discovered Targum (Neofiti I) go back to an early date, the Targums have become startlingly relevant to the New Testament". Bowker, 1969, pxi.

still is the date put forward by M Kasher who suggests that it has its origins (along with Jonathan and Onqelos) with Ezra in the fifth century BC.[214] It is these writings, in his view, that influenced the Tannaim and Amoraim in forming the Talmud and Mishnah.[215]

Not surprisingly there are a number who sound notes of caution. In 1951 Teicher challenged Kahle's interpretation of Exodus 22:4-5[216] and did not see anything in Kahle's position to cause him to overturn his opinion that the fragments were from the mid-ninth century at the earliest. York has systematically tackled Diez Macho's position, outlined above, and concluded that it is far from easy to establish that Codex Neofiti contains an unadulterated Targum from the first century.[217] More recently, a date no earlier than the fourth century has been offered by Safrai.[218]

A further difficulty is the date of the Codex itself (1504[219]) which has led to the suggestion that any Targum it contains is overlaid with "substantial layers of very late material dated certainly from after the beginning of the 15th century".[220] Of course, it could be argued that all Targumim develop up until the date of the earliest extant manuscript, but even if that were the case it remains most probable that the "major work of the Targum/translation took place closer to the beginning of the process than to the end".[221]

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214. McNamara, 1968, p215-6.
215. See the introduction to Grossfeld & Schiffman, 2000.
216. Teicher, 1951. He wrote: "It is somewhat surprising that such far-reaching conclusions should have been drawn from an unusual rendering of a single biblical word", p125. After dating the fragments to the ninth century, he concludes "Since the Genizah fragments are much later than KAHLE assumed, and since Jews in Palestine spoke no Aramaic at the time when these fragments were written down, might not these peculiarities of the language of the Genizah fragments, noticed by KUTCHER, be due to the contamination of the text by scribes who were versed in Eastern Aramaic, or by the influence of Christian Aramaic? ", p129.
217. York, 1974.
218. Safrai, 2006, pp269ff.
219. Brock, 1986, p161.
220. Malachi Martin, "The Babylonian Tradition and Targum," Le Psautiev, Louvain, 1962, p. 342. Cited in Okamoto, 1976, p161. Moshe Goshen-Gottstein dates the present text of Neofiti to the sixteenth century.
221. Clarke, 1993, p387.

Other objections to a very early date are linguistic. Some have noted that the form of Aramaic in the Palestinian Targumim (sometimes known as Galilean Aramaic)[222] is not that commonly associated with Targumic literature of the pre-Bar Kochba period which would push its date back to later than 135.[223] Moreover, the Targumim found in Qumran do not contain terms found in the Palestinian Targumim such as Memra (which although present in Targum Job does not have the same sense) and Shekinah.[224]

Given all of this, any dating of Neofiti is precarious. The textual arguments for an early date for Neofiti made by Diez Macho were comprehensively rebuffed by Wernberg-Møller[225] and later, Klein has argued that the supposed *Vorlage* is more likely to be the result of "translational and orthographic peculiarities"[226] than a pre-Masoretic Text tradition. There has been a suggestion that passages with an anti-Mishnah trend must predate the Mishnah, since passages which post-date the Mishnah would have been 'corrected' towards this tradition. However, this assumes a greater uniformity within the tradition than evidence suggests.[227]

Whilst a bibliographic/documentary relationship between the Targumim and the New Testament is therefore difficult to establish, it is easier to envisage a relationship of influence between the two. After all, the Targum is the product of a community and represents the worldview of that community. It has a pre-history in the community's tradition. If a tradition can be identified within Neofiti and the New Testament it does not necessarily follow that there is a direct relationship, but such a parallel would suggest a common *Vorlage* of tradition rather than text. There are some examples within the New Testament where this can be seen to be at work.

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222. McNamara, 1983, p214.
223. Kaufman, 1973, p326-7.
224. McNamara, 1968, p214. Fitzmeyer is representative of those who object to an early date when he writes: "It seems to me that Qumran evidence puts the burden of proof on those who would maintain an early date for the buffer or personified usage of מאמרא in the discussion of the Johannine λογος [*logos*]". Fitzmeyer, 1997, A Wandering Aramean, p95.
225. Wernberg-Møller, 1962.
226. Klein, 1972, p490.
227. York, 1974, pp52ff.

c) Knowledge of the Targumim in the New Testament

The New Testament portrays the relationship between Jesus and his disciples and the synagogues. Luke records Jesus as going to the synagogue at Nazareth "as was his custom" (Luke 4:16) and Paul's missionary method would see him begin his teaching at each city in the synagogue. By the first century the synagogues were an established part of Jewish life and study of the scriptures formed perhaps the main part of the meeting.[228] One would therefore expect the Gospel authors to be familiar with synagogue practice and, as a consequence, the Targumim.

There is also some evidence for a knowledge of a Targum within the New Testament text itself since there is idiomatic material common to both, for example:

> Genesis 49:25b (Neofiti): Blessed are the breasts from which you sucked, and the womb in which you lay.
>
> Luke 11:27: Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you![229]

There is evidence of a knowledge of a Palestinian Targum in the discussion that takes place at the well between Jesus and a Samaritan woman in John 4. Ramón Díaz suggests the passage is best understood against the background of Genesis 28:10,[230] from Neofiti:

> And the fifth miracle: when our father Jacob raised the stone from off the mouth of the well, the well overflowed and came up before him, and was overflowing for twenty years; all the days that he was dwelling in Haran.

With this in mind, the conversation with the Samaritan makes good sense:

> "Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Jacob's well provided water for only twenty years, Jesus - who is greater than Jacob -

228. Sanders, 1994, pp195-208.
229. McNamara, 1983, p217.
230. Diaz, 1963, pp76-77.

provides water gushing up to eternal life.[231]

Some additional evidence for a targumic background to portions of John's Gospel may be garnered from 8:39-45 where the Jews are identified as being "from your father the devil". In Pseudo Jonathan at Genesis 5:3 we read:

> And Adam . . . begat Seth who had the likeness of his image and of his similitude: for before, had Eve born Cain, who was not like him . . . and Cain was cast out: neither is his seed genealogized in the book of genealogy of Adam.[232]

Diaz notes a tradition whereby Cain is the product of Eve and Sammael, an angel identified with evil. This tradition may also underlie 1 John 3:8-12:[233]

> . . [8]the devil has sinned from the beginning. . . [9]No one born of God commits sin; for God's offspring abide in him. . . [12]We must not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother.

d) Why bother with the Targumim?

One passage, which might have been added to the list above, serves to illustrate the prevailing view towards the Targumim. McNeil has argued that John 12:34 reflects the text of Targum Jonathan 52:13,[234] a view later rebutted by Chilton who fears that "the optimistic assumption that the Targumim predate the N.T. may lead us seriously astray".[235] In view of such a dire warning, would it not be better to leave well alone (as, indeed, many commentators do)?

For all that, there remains the fact that Targumic literature was extant during the formation of the Gospels. Moreover, this literature was used in such a manner (i.e. in the Synagogue) that it is likely that the wider Jewish-Christian community would be familiar with it and that the thought contained within it would have an influence upon their conception of the manner in which the Old Testament related to the person and ministry of Christ. To simply ignore this corpus would be to neglect a significant

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231. On this, see also Evans, 1993, p160.
232. Cited in Diaz, 1963, p79.
233. Diaz, 1963, p79. Evans, 1993, p161.
234. McNeil, 1977
235. Chilton, 1980

strand of the thought of the Judaism of the time. In the article cited above, Chilton agreed that the Targumim represent the culmination "of the exegetical work of centuries" and thus may reflect earlier traditions extant within the first century.[236] Thus they should be "combed for early material (even if expressed in the language of a later age) which might illuminate the N.T.".[237]

To dismiss the Targumim is to ignore an important clue as to the worldview and exegetical practices of the first century but, it is clear, they should be handled with care. They may illuminate what can be discerned elsewhere, but of themselves may prove to be sandy ground on which to build.

V. Summary

The encounter with Scripture within the Second Temple period was a communal matter, and one shaped by the oral 'performance' of certain texts. This led to a certain textual fluidity and the possibility of interpretative traditions being woven into existing texts viewed as scriptural.

These re-understandings form the shared basis of a community and, in turn, lead to the production of new texts by the community which spring from this interpretation of a pre-existing scriptural text. The new texts, and the community itself, garner an authenticity and authority from their relation to the original scriptural text.

Early Christianity during the period of the production of the Gospels, understood itself as the 'true' Judaism and was keen to emphasize its relation to the Jewish Scriptures. There is a danger in understanding the expulsion of the Johannine community from the synagogues, or any purported Jewish councils as placing a large ideological gulf between the two communities. Rather than using language of separation at this stage, the period is better understood as a one of family squabbles.

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236. Chilton, 1980, p176.
237. Chilton, 1980, p178. Unfortunately he offers no schema for identifying such traditions.

We have, therefore, with the early Christian communities a desire to portray their particular understanding of the significance of Christ as 'according to the Scriptures'. There is no desire to define themselves over and against the existing Jewish community. Rather the argument is over the 'correct' interpretation of a common textual basis. This textual basis has its locus in the Greek translation of the Scriptures, and it is these translations which form the core of the textual community of the early Christians.

Alongside the interpretative tradition embodied in the Greek translations, it is wise to consider the interpretations which exist within the Targumim. To be sure, they form a far from certain basis on which to build an argument for a particular tradition existing within Second Temple Judaism. However, they do represent the development of those traditions and are of use in corroboration of traditions discerned within texts which have a stronger Second Temple provenance.

Any understanding of Christ in relation to the theophanic material in the Old Testament is best traced with respect to the broader Second Temple traditions, and against the scriptural background of the Greek translations. The traditions which grew to surround the theophanies had their influence on the Christian communities.

4
Theophany and Exoduses

The aim in this chapter is not to carry out an exhaustive discussion of theophanies in the Old Testament, but rather to identify their portrayal within the covenantal narratives of Israel. There will first be a discussion as to the narrative pattern of these appearances, which will be shown to fall into a 'type scene'. Afterwards, there will be a consideration of the hope for a future theophanic appearance of the LORD. The purpose of this is to demonstrate the link between theophany and the hope for a 'full' return from the Exile and to suggest that this is background for the portrayal of Christ in Mark and John. This return is long hoped for and is evident within both the Old Testament and the intertestamental literature.

I. The Theophany 'Type Scene'

It is possible to discern in the narratives of theophanies in the Old Testament what may be described as a 'type-scene'. This literary tool was applied to Biblical texts by Robert Alter, who used it in connection with betrothal and annunciation 'scenes'.[238] He views the form critics of his day, who practice the "closest approximation to the study of convention", as placing too many constraints upon the texts as they seek recurrences rather than allowing for "the manifold variation upon a pattern that any system of literary convention elicits".[239] This distinction between the 'type scene' and the 'form' is an important one as the former allows for a greater "intertextual

238. Alter describes this application of the literary convention to Biblical texts as "unrecognized". Alter, 1981, p48. He refers to these type scenes as 'literary conventions'.

239. Alter, 1981, p47f.

influence" whereas the latter places a greater emphasis upon "a basic formal model".[240] The result of this is a greater flexibility of application and a less slavish adherence to a single form which is then duplicated in other writings such that any given text is viewed as "a kind of recurrent stammer in the process of transmission".[241] Moreover, there is no need to try and reconstruct a primary text from which all others derive.

That, of course, is not to suggest that previous form studies are to be rejected. Rather, the patterns which are discerned are not viewed as clues to the reconstruction/identification of an ur-form, but rather they portray an understanding as to how such scenes play out within the Biblical writings.

This kind of analysis is particularly relevant when used in conjunction with the principles of Textual Communities outlined above since it serves to identify the patterns and types which form the textual contexts for these communities. One would expect that any writings produced by such communities would make use of these type scenes when writing their own texts. It is one means by which events can be "according to the scriptures".

This methodology has been applied to the phenomenon of theophany by Savran in his very useful study published in 2005, and a brief survey of his findings is appropriate here.[242]

a) The Type Scene

After a consideration of the work of Habel, Richter, Zimmerli, and particularly Simon, Savran has proposed a Type-Scene which comprises four major moves.[243]

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240. Savran, 2005, p12.
241. Alter, 1981, p50.
242. Savran, 2005, chapter 1, which is an expansion of Savran, 2003.
243. Savran's definition of theophany is as follows:"[T]he term "theophany" is used here not in its figurative sense of 'encounter with the divine,'' but, in keeping with the Greek φαινειν, "to appear,"' it implies the presence of a visual component in addition to verbal interaction. In all the texts we will consider, the visual element is present in some form, though it is not necessarily the dominant form of revelation. Moreover, the

1) Preparation for theophany

The theophanic encounter begins with a separation of the recipient(s).[244] In the case of Jacob this is his family, for Moses it is a separation from the rest of the Israelites or, in an earlier theophany, Moses has to turn aside to encounter the burning bush. This separation ensures that the "appearance of the divine is antithetical to human company",[245] but also that the location of the event can take on a significance. Moses has to remove his sandals at the burning bush, the Israelites cannot ascend the mountain when the law is given, Gideon is hiding and so on.

This preparation serves the purpose of creating a "liminal space",[246] and it is therefore unsurprising that theophanies take place in places of physical or cultic significance. Savran comments that sometimes "the location is centered around a natural phenomenon such as water (Hagar, Jacob at the Jabbok, Ezekiel) or a tree (Abraham, Gideon), with no cultic site attached".[247] However, this tends to overlook the role of water and trees within sacred sites.

With regard to trees, it is clear from the narrative of the Old Testament that they played a significant part within the religion of the Ancient Near East. It is a tree (or rather two) which play the central part in the drama of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Abram is visited by the three at the oak at Mamre (Genesis 18) and plants a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and calls upon the name of the LORD (Genesis 21). After the events of Mount Carmel, Elijah "went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree" from where he prayed that he might die (1

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term "theophany narrative" applies only to those encounters in which the narrative framework is apparent. It is precisely such a framework that offers contrasting points of view, temporal progression, and the development of character, providing a portrait of how the Bible understood the peculiar dynamics of such an encounter. Conversely, although the rich tradition of poetic descriptions of theophany has much to contribute to the biblical understanding of such appearances of the divine, it will serve only as background for the major part of our discussion, since these texts lack the narrative framework that describes the reception of theophany."

244. See particularly Savran, 2005, chapter 2.
245. Savran, 2005, p14.
246. Savran, 2005, p32.
247. Savran, 2005, p32.

Kings 19:4).

The widespread use of trees as sacred sites within Canaan is attested by the commands to destroy such sites, the admonitions against setting up any new ones and condemnation of any sites which are made.

> You must demolish completely all the places where the nations whom you are about to dispossess served their gods, on the mountain heights, on the hills, and under every leafy tree. (Deuteronomy 12:2)

> You shall not plant any tree as a sacred pole beside the altar that you make for the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 16:21)

> For they also built for themselves high places, pillars, and sacred poles on every high hill and under every green tree (1 Kings 14:23. See also 2 Kings 16:4, 17:10; 2 Chronicles 28:4)

As to water, its scarcity due to the geography and climate of Israel resulted in its heightened importance as can be seen from the description of the 'good land' in Deuteronomy 8:7: "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills".

Unsurprisingly, wells become important landmarks and play a metaphoric role as sources of life. So it is that, for example, we find in Isaiah the promise that "with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (12:3). The fountain or spring is similarly viewed, with the LORD being the fountain of living water (Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13, cf also Psalm 36:9,) and the 'fountain of life' being a theme within the wisdom literature (cf Psalm 36:9; Proverbs 10:11, 13:14, 14:27, 6:22).

The theme is present within the hope for a return from Exile, as can be seen in Isaiah 41:18 and 49:10:

> [41:18]I will open rivers on the bare heights,
> and fountains in the midst of the valleys;
> I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
> and the dry land springs of water.

[49:10]they shall not hunger or thirst,
neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down,
for he who has pity on them will lead them,
and by springs of water will guide them.

Moreover, water is given eschatological significance in Joel 3:18 where on the day of the LORD "the mountains shall drip sweet wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah, shall flow with water; a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Wadi Shittim". In Zechariah 13:1 we read: "On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity"

All of this suggests that Savran may be too hasty to dismiss trees and water as not cultic as they are often places of significance, whether cultic or metaphoric.

2) The Appearance and Speech of the LORD

Once separated to a significant location, the protagonist then experiences the theophany itself which normally follows the pattern of a visual manifestation followed by divine speech. This pattern varies in the case of those who have already experienced theophanic episodes such as in the later theophanies to Moses (Exodus 33) and Elijah (1 Kings 19). Savran suggests that this is because the role of the visual aspect of theophany is to gain the protagonist's attention.[248]

The appearance itself is often 'distanced' from the recipient in some manner or other which may be a result of the initial approach of an intermediary/ies (e.g. Genesis 18), or allusive language in the description of the event (Ezekiel 1). Once the speech begins, the visual aspect ceases to be depicted.

3) Human Response to the Presence of the Divine

Once the theophany is made manifest, the focus turns to the reaction of the witness(es).

248. Savran, 2005, p16.

3.1. Fear and Fascination

The reaction of the recipient of the theophany is "an unusual display of humility or fear, an awareness of 'creature consciousness'"[249] which may be seen in posture, or words. Similarly, it is not uncommon for there to be an exclamation of relief at the end of the experience that the recipient has survived the encounter.

Alongside this fear, it is not unusual to see fascination. Moses is drawn to the bush, but is commanded to stop and remove his shoes. Isaiah views the vision, before being overtaken with fear of death.

3.2. The Expression of Doubt and Anxiety

Whilst it is not true that every theophany elicits a strong reluctance from the recipient to carry out the commission assigned to them, it is true that what are often described as 'call narratives' do include a reticence from the one who is called. There can be, however, a tendency to overplay this, and to imply a reluctance from incidental aspects of the scene. For example, Jeremiah is silent and so a reticence has to be implied from encouragement given to Jeremiah during the theophany.

It is possible that this response may be occasioned by "psychological uncertainty" and Savran notes that this "incredulity" is common within theophanies which are not call narratives (Sarah is given as an example).[250]

In order to explain this phenomenon Savran proposes a pattern of separation and reintegration along the following lines (the greater the indent, the greater the separation):

Part One: Separation and the overwhelming of the self

Separation from companions to significant site

Encounter of the Divine

249. Savran, 2005, p18.
250. Savran, 2005, p20.

Fear and Fascination

Part Two: Reintegration into human world

A regaining of the self manifesting as a reluctance/scepticism

(This may also be a request which is declined as in Exodus 33:18)

An externalisation of the experience (see below)

Return to the public sphere

4) Externalization

The final stage of the scene is a return of the protagonist to the 'human' realm which often results in the "establishing of a social role or a ritual structure for translating the private experience into an ongoing collective framework".[251] Examples of this would be Moses' shining face in Exodus 34, the altar Gideon builds in Genesis 32:32, or the subsequent career of a prophet after a theophanic call.

b) Varieties of Scenes

In addition to the type scene itself, Savran has identified three varieties of scene which fulfil different purposes.

1) Initiation and Identity

The most common context for a theophany is that of commission. These can either be 'embedded' within the narrative of an individual such as Moses, or can form the call of a writing prophet such as Isaiah. A subset of these would be the annunciation narratives to women.

2) Redefinition in Midlife

Within this category, Savran places theophanies which do not contain a call *per se* but which "may reflect something of a crisis in the life of the individual (or the nation)".[252] In this category would be the later theophanies to Elijah (1 Kings 19) and Moses (Exodus 33).

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251. Savran, 2005, p22.
252. Savran, 2005, p27.

3) Group Theophany

These are more unusual. As noted above, Savran is employing a broader definition of theophany than is the case in this study, and he thus includes here the Sinai theophany of Exodus 19ff as well as that before the priests in Leviticus 9f which sees the deaths of Nadav and Abihu. One might add here the theophany in Exodus 24 before the seventy elders, Moses, Aaron, Nadav and Abihu (which Savran discusses in pp75ff).

II. Theophany and the return of the LORD to Zion

> [2]This is what the Lord Almighty says: I have been jealous for Ierousalem and Sion with great jealousy, and I have been jealous for her with great wrath. [3]This is what the Lord says: And I will return to Sion, and I will tent in the midst of Ierousalem, and Ierousalem shall be called a city that is true, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty, a holy mountain. Zechariah 8:2-3 (LXX)[253]

Whereas Savran has surveyed the theophanies which are within the Old Testament, it is true to say that there is also a hope for a further theophany: the return of the LORD to Jerusalem and, in particular, to the Temple. In 1996, N T Wright commented in connection with the Second Temple hope of a physical return of YHWH to Zion, that "[t]he second-Temple Jewish hope for YHWH's return has not received as much attention as I believe it should".[254] This is a situation which still broadly remains, although, as will be seen, some attention has been given to the theme in recent years.

The return from Exile was an experience which had, by the time of the Roman rule, been somewhat underwhelming for Jews. As Wright has pointed out, the hoped for glorious return of the LORD is conspicuous by its absence.[255] This absence is all the

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253. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are taken from the New English Translation of the Septuagint. It is based upon the Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum (1931- , 20 vol.: Göttingen), which is the Greek text used throughout this thesis.
254. Wright, 1996, p615.
255. "[a]t no point do we hear that YHWH has now gloriously returned to Zion. At no point is the house again filled with the cloud which veils his glory. At no point is the rebuilt Temple universally hailed as the true restored shrine spoken of by Ezekiel". Wright, 1996, p621.

more stark since, as is widely held, there is an evocation of the Exodus in the portrayal of the return from Exile[256] and it is to be expected that such a return would be accompanied with some echoes (at least) of the phenomena which accompanied that first Exodus.

a) The Empty Temple in Second Temple Literature

There is always a risk of oversimplifying Jewish thought in the Second Temple period, but the literature points to a dissatisfaction with the Temple and a sense that it is not quite what it ought to be.[257] This is not to suggest an outright rejection by all, but there is certainly a sense of longing which even the Maccabean triumph with its subsequent cleansing of the Temple does not dispel. One well known example of this thought is the community at Qumran, as can be seen in the hope expressed in the Temple Scroll.

> [...On the fifth day ... and the corresponding grain offering] and drink-offer[ing] ... in the house on which I [shall cause] my name to rest ... holocausts, [each on its] day according to the law of this statute, always from the children of Israel in addition to their freewill-offerings in regard to all that they offer, their drink-offerings and all their gifts that they shall bring to me in order to be acceptable. I shall accept them and they shall be my people and I shall be for them for ever. I will dwell with them for ever and ever and will sanctify my [sa]nctuary by my glory. I will cause my glory to rest on it until the day of creation on which I shall create my sanctuary, establishing it for myself for all time according to the covenant which I have made with Jacob in Bethel. (Chapter 29)

The future hope expressed within this passage would suggest that the temple is viewed as currently devoid of the presence of God. This is of a piece with the broader desire in this scroll that a renewed focus upon purity will cause God's presence (variously described as name or glory) to once more rest in the Temple.[258] This view can be seen to a lesser degree in the relationship of the Sadducees and Pharisees to the temple,[259] with the latter seeking purity as a means to reviving the

256. Although, see Knowles, 2004 who argues that the imagery is rather that of a pilgrimage than an Exodus whilst acknowledging that "Many scholars have argued that these returns (or Ezra 1 at least) are deliberately modelled on the exodus from Egypt", p57.
257. Rowland refers to the attitude as "ambivalence". Rowland, 2007, p469
258. cf *T* 45:12–14, 46:4–12; 47:3-18; 51:7–10.
259. Klawans, 2006, p161.

temple's fortunes whilst not rejecting the temple. In turn, this view is broadly of a piece with the earlier prophetic critique, neatly summarised by Klawans: "God will cause some divine aspect to dwell in a temple, provided it is pure".[260]

How might this dissatisfaction be explained? It would seem to be the result of a perceived lack of fulfilment of those prophetic announcements of a return of the LORD to Zion - as outlined above - which in turn gives rise to a hope of a renewed Temple. The LORD will once again dwell with his people.

This process is two-fold. Firstly, there is within Ezekiel the portrayal of the LORD leaving the Temple prior to its destruction by the Babylonians:

> [6]He said to me, 'Mortal, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? Yet you will see still greater abominations' (8:6).
>
> [22]Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. [23]And the glory of the LORD ascended from the middle of the city, and stopped on the mountain east of the city". (11:22-23)

For Ezekiel, the departure of the glory of the LORD is the result of the 'abominations' practised by the Priesthood within the Temple (cf chapters eight to eleven) yet, unlike the community at Qumran, there is not an outright rejection of the Temple (Ezekiel is, after all, identified as a priest) - more a hope for a future 're-dwelling' of the glory of the LORD.

The significance of the return of the LORD from the east will be considered below in the section dealing with Mark, but for now it will do to note that there is an expectation that the glory will return to the Temple. Moreover, there is an evocation of 2 Chronicles 7:2 where "[t]he priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house".

This 're-dwelling' is the second step and can be seen within Ezekiel too in chapters 40 to 43 when the glory returns to a renewed Temple:

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260. Klawans, 2006, p155, n40.

[43:1]Then he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. [2]And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory. [3]The vision I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. [4]As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, the spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

The book of Ezekiel ends with the hope summarised: "And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD is There" (48:35).

A similar theme is present in Jeremiah, another prophet with a Priestly connection. In chapter seven there is a presupposition that the LORD is absent from the Temple in some way.[261] Or, at least, there is the potential for an indwelling that is fuller, with a threat of destruction should ways not be amended:

[7:3]Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place...[5]For if you truly amend your ways and your doings...then I will dwell with you in this place...[11]Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight?...[14]therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your ancestors, just what I did to Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:3-14)

In Zechariah there is similarly a hope that Zion will once again be inhabited by the LORD:

[2:4]Run, say to that young man: Jerusalem shall be inhabited like villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and animals in it. [5]For I will be a wall of fire all around it, says the LORD, and I will be the glory within it.

[2:10]Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the LORD. [11]Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. [12]The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.[262]

Later, in Zechariah 8:3, this hope is restated:

Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts shall be called the holy mountain.

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261. A chapter which, it should be remembered, is quoted in the Gospels.
262. Wright draws attention to "the explicit exodus-imagery, with YHWH as fire defending his people". Wright, 1996, p620.

For Malachi, this will be a sudden event:

> [1]See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. [2]But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? (Malachi 3:1-2)

Yet, for all this hope, it was evident for many who did indeed return from Exile that the LORD had not returned. This is a theme which persists throughout the Second Temple period:

> 1 Enoch 25:3
> And he replied saying, This high mountain, whose summit is like the throne of God, is the seat where the great Lord sits, the holy one of glory, the king of eternity, when he descends to visit the earth with good things.

> Jubilees 1:26-28
> ...until I descend and dwell with them throughout eternity.' [27]And He said to the angel of the presence: Write for Moses, from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity. [28]And the Lord will appear to the eyes of all, and all shall know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob, and King on Mount Zion for all eternity. And Zion and Jerusalem shall be holy.'

As well as the documentary evidence, further evidence for a dissatisfaction with the temple can be adduced from the praxis of the period.[263] Recent years have seen a desire to rethink the scope and operation of purity with Second Temple Judaism. Rather than seeing purity as the primary reserve of the priesthood (and others, such as the Pharisees who wish to imitate) there is evidence that purity was a wider concern. This has also led to a recognition that the Temple was not the sole dispenser of purity within the period, but that private practices of purity also took place elsewhere.[264] An example of this can be seen when Tobit washes himself after handling a dead body and a second time after burying that body (Tobit 2). Neither washing is done with reference to the Temple,[265] and the fact that non-priests are carrying out purity rituals could well be a result of a view that the Temple is not

263. cf Poirier, 2003b.

264. On this see, for example, Poirier, 2003b. Also, Klawans, 2006, especially Chapter 6.

265. Rowland makes the salient point that "Early Christianity is part of a wider social and theological trend evident in Jewish texts in which cultic language is used in a transferred sense of common life or individual holiness, so that the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, however catastrophic it might have been, did not leave Jewish groups, of whom the early Christians were one without the resources to construct a religion which could survive without sacrifice and the ritual of the Temple". Rowland, 2007, p469

operating in the manner in which it should.

The hope for a renewal of the presence of the LORD within the Temple is a theme which is extensively developed within Isaiah.

b) Isaiah and the New Exodus

The transformation of the Exile motif within the Isaianic literature is something which is not lost on scholars.[266] An example of this transformation, and one cited in Mark, can be seen in Isaiah 40:3: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God". Given that this is an account of a return from Exile to the promised land from Babylon, it is not difficult to see how the Exodus is evoked: "The LORD went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night." (Exodus 13:21). This is especially the case since "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken" (Isaiah 40:5).

The terminology of the 'Way' (דֶּרֶךְ) is an important component within this evocation. As can be seen above, it is found within Exodus 13:21 and it can also be seen within Exodus 23:20: "I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared". Within Isaiah 40-55, 'the way' is used in a manner which carries with it connotations of the LORD on the way within the Exodus. Yet, there is more too since it carries an eschatological edge,[267] as can be illustrated by Isaiah 43:16-19:

> [16]Thus says the LORD,
> who makes a way in the sea,
> a path in the mighty waters,
> [17]who brings out chariot and horse,
> army and warrior;
> they lie down, they cannot rise,
> they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
> [18]Do not remember the former things,
> or consider the things of old.
> [19]I am about to do a new thing;

266. See, for example, the monographs of Pao, 2000 and Watts, 1997. See also Anderson, 1962, which has proved influential in this matter.

267. Pao, 2000, p52.

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.

This re-imagining of the Exodus theme is a key component of the Isaianic hope of redemption, and it has been argued that this reworked theme is presented as "replacing the first Exodus as *the* saving event".[268] Whilst that may be too strong meat for some, it is the case that the Exodus was paradigmatic, a "lens through which Israel is viewed throughout the rest of the Bible",[269] so it is unsurprising to find the return from Babylon as viewed as typologically of a piece with this event.[270] Moreover, the theme is treated within Isaiah with unique "intensity and fullness"[271]as can be seen from the following list of passages containing the imagery, compiled by Anderson:[272] 40:3-5; 41:17-20; 42:14-16; 43:1-3; 43:14-21; 48:20-21; 49:8-12; 51:9-10; 52:11-12; 55:12-13.

It is important to note that the LORD is consistently portrayed as returning to Zion with the people, which would suggest that there is more in mind than a pilgrimage, as some have held.[273] So it is that the Exiles are told that the LORD will be "with you" (43:1-3) and lead them as a shepherd leads the mother sheep (40:11).[274] The LORD will "lead the blind ... I will guide them" (42:16, cf 49:10). There is evocation of the accompaniment that occurred in the first Exodus to be found in 52:12: "For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard". So it is that the Way is to be prepared for the LORD as well as his people. The LORD, as in the Exodus, will travel with his people[275].

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268. Watts, 1990, p33. Emphasis his. Given the discussion above on Textual Communities, one might prefer to use language of reapplication rather than replacement.
269. Durham, 1987, pxxiii.
270. Durham, 1987, pxxiv.
271. Watts, 1987, p81.
272. Anderson, 1962, pp181-182.
273. For example, Knowles, 2004.
274. cf Exodus 15:13: "In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed; you guided them by your strength to your holy abode", Psalms 77:20: "You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron", and Psalm 78:52: "Then he led out his people like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock".
275. Pao, 2000, p53.

The pinnacle of this New Exodus is, therefore, the return of the LORD to Jerusalem/ Zion. It is for this end that the Way is to be prepared, it is a "a highway for our God" (40:3). This, of course, parallels the first Exodus. When Moses is called, he is told: "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain" (Exodus 3:12). The Sinai theophany marks the goal of the first theophany and the revealing of the glory of the LORD marks the end of the New Exodus. The exiles are told "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken" (40:5). Inasmuch as the goal of the first Exodus was the Sinai event, the goal of the New Exodus, then, is the presence of God within Zion.[276]

This return is something which is present throughout Isaiah, as these further examples illustrate:

Isaiah 4:5	Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over its places of assembly a cloud by day and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night. Indeed over all the glory there will be a canopy.
Isaiah 24:23	... for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders he will manifest his glory.
Isaiah 25:9-10	[9]This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. [10]For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.
Isaiah 52:8	Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion.
Isaiah 59:19-20	...for he will come like a pent-up stream that the wind of the LORD drives on. [20]And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the LORD.

276. Watts, 1997, p296.

III. Summary

Within the Second Temple period there is a sense that the longed for return of the LORD to Zion is incomplete at best. This in some cases led to a rejection of the temple, and in others - such as the Pharisees - a renewed zeal towards the Law. The description within Isaiah of a return of the LORD in the manner of a second Exodus is therefore a redolent one. Given the fact that this hope draws upon the traditions surrounding the first Exodus, it is unsurprising to find theophanic motifs within it. Just as in the first Exodus, the LORD will lead his people out, with his presence experienced by means of theophany.

Given the presence of a 'type-scene' by which theophany is described within the Old Testament, it is not inconceivable that this theophanic return would be portrayed in a similar manner. Within the New Testament, then, one would expect to find Jesus portrayed in the manner of the Old Testament theophanies. He is viewed as the LORD who is leading his people back to Zion, and thereby fulfilling the expectations and hopes embodied within Isaiah. This will be investigated below.

However, before that is done there is another, related, element of Second Temple thought which needs to be considered. The perceived lack of the presence led to new understandings as to how the LORD was present within the Temple and amongst the Jewish people. Rather than the dwelling of the LORD by means of the Shekhinah, other 'attributes' of the LORD were understood to mediate his presence.

As will be seen, the importance of these 'attributes' is twofold: firstly, they are viewed as part of God's identity and therefore have a share in his identity;[277]; secondly, they are often portrayed as interacting within the 'earthly' realm. Given this, it is possible to see how they could be seen to operate in the same manner as the theophanies. In fact, in a culture which lays stress on the transcendence of God, it is not difficult to envisage how these 'attributes' may be understood as the presence

277. Here they differ from other 'exalted beings' such as patriarchs, angels and so on. For a discussion on this see Bauckham, 1998b, especially chapter one.

which is made manifest within a theophany.

These re-interpretations of presence are discussed in the next Chapter.

5
The Mediation of Presence in Second Temple Judaism

As has been discussed above, within the Second Temple period there was a sense that the return from the Exile was less than complete. In particular the return of the LORD to Zion as envisaged by, amongst others, Isaiah and Ezekiel, had failed to be made manifest.

One result of this is the development of new patterns of presence in which the LORD is seen to be present in Zion, but in a manner somewhat removed from the experience of the Exodus and the first Temple. It is in this context that the imagining of, for instance, the Wisdom of the LORD develops into something whereby a transcendent God can be present within the immediate experience of Israel. Within the New Testament, John's treatment of the Word will be seen to belong to this strand of interpretation. However there is a desire within, for example, John to portray Jesus as not simply the embodiment of one or other of these new patterns of presence, but to be the incarnation of them all.

I. Heavenly Beings

In discussing monotheism within late Second Temple Judaism, N T Wright lists nine trends that can be discerned within sectarian Judaism.[278] Of these nine, the first two

278. Wright, 1992, pp256-7.

concern us here:

1. There is a noticeable increase in speculation about heavenly beings other than the one god;
2. The mainline Jewish distinction between the creator and the world is accentuated, with an abhorrence of the self and its cleaving to the dust of the earth;

These two trends are, of course, linked, with the second very much a product of the first. These other 'heavenly beings' often acted as intermediaries and were the means by which the transcendent God dealt with creation. Three of these 'heavenly beings' (and a fourth, connected notion) will be dealt with below.

As will be seen, these figures develop from the Hebrew Jewish scriptures and are often developed within the wider Jewish Greek scriptures. Commonly, it is the passages which have unusual grammar or ambiguities which give rise to speculation of this type and, as such, these 'heavenly beings' can be viewed as biblical developments rather than wholly new phenomena.

The influence of these speculations, and this kind of exegetical practice, on the nascent Christian communities will be explored below when the New Testament writings are discussed. For now it should be borne in mind that Christianity emerges from this kind of exegetical atmosphere and its influence is not surprising. A consideration of this atmosphere will provide a context for the assertions concerning Christ contained within the New Testament.

II. Wisdom and the Torah

A significant, and commonly discussed, factor within the interpretative matrix of the Second Temple period is that of Wisdom. The background of Wisdom ideas within John's Gospel is well attested, but a chronological tracing of the development of the Wisdom narrative is particularly useful in order to ascertain the narrative arc into which this and other New Testament writings fit.[279]

279. In this, I will broadly follow Ringe, 1999, chapter three.

a) Proverbs and Job

Any development of the Wisdom thought naturally enough begins within the Old Testament, and in particular Proverbs. There is a brief appearance of Wisdom in Psalm 104 as the principle by which creation is effected, but there is no sustained treatment of the theme. Similarly in Job 28, there is no real sense of personification of Wisdom as a divine attribute.[280]

It is in Proverbs, though, that the roots of the later development of a Wisdom theology can be discerned, especially in chapter eight. Within this chapter Wisdom is clearly subordinate to God, being the first created, but is clearly pre-eminent among creation. She is also the "master worker" beside God[281] and as such is the partner of God within creation. Yet the activity of Wisdom is not simply limited to the activity of creation, but she is also the authority by which princes and kings rule. She is not, it should be noted, something to be gained from nature, but is the revelation of God[282] and her presence/participation within the process of creation is what gives her authority to speak of the purposes of God.[283]

Within Proverbs there are the seeds for a second being besides God who is an agent, in this instance of creation and authority. However, the real development of the role of Wisdom takes place within the intertestamental literature where a greater narrative

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280. Dunn, 1989, p168.

281. 8:30. The LXX has "fitting together" - ἁρμόζουσα. There is considerable debate as to the correct translation of the אמון. Whilst the Bible translations tend towards "master-worker" (NRSV, ESV - NIV has the related "craftsman") there is a case to be made for counsellor or nursling (Hurowitz, 1999) as a proper translation. There is also a suggestion that the word is an infinitive absolute giving the meaning "growing up" (Fox, 1996). Scott, 1960 made a suggestion of "living link", but this has gained little traction. For a recent contribution to the debate see Weeks, 2006. Rogers, 1997a has suggested that אמון is best understood as an attribute of God, not of Wisdom.

    Since it has been argued above that the Greek scriptures should be given a priority in textual issues, it would seem safe to remain with the translation of "master-worker" since it carries the connotations of building inherent in the Greek (cf BDAG, especially 2).

282. Murphy, 1985, pp9-10.

283. Bauckham argues that creation is something which is solely identified with God within Second Temple Judaism. Therefore to share in creation is to participate in the identity of God. Bauckham, 1998b.

of Wisdom's activities is set forth.

b) The Torah as Wisdom's dwelling

A tentative dating of Sirach to around 180BC makes it the next of the extant writings to develop the theme of Wisdom.[284] The book was, most likely, originally in Hebrew[285] and within are themes reminiscent of Proverbs. In fact, Sirach 1:14-20 can be seen as an expansion upon the Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge":

[14]To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
she is created with the faithful in the womb.
[15]She made among human beings an eternal foundation,
and among their descendants she will abide faithfully.
[16]To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom;
she inebriates mortals with her fruits;
[17]she fills their whole house with desirable goods,
and their storehouses with her produce.
[18]The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom,
making peace and perfect health to flourish.
[19]She rained down knowledge and discerning comprehension,
and she heightened the glory of those who held her fast.
[20]To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom,
and her branches are long life.

Of most relevance to the narrative of the activity of Wisdom is chapter 24 where "Wisdom praises herself" (verse one) and is identified with God's word,[286] "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High..." (verse three), an event that happened "in the beginning" (ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς - verse nine).[287] This chapter provides a narrative of Wisdom's activities in the world, whereby she seeks for a place to dwell (4-7):

[4]I dwelt in the highest heavens,
and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.
[5]Alone I compassed the vault of heaven
and traversed the depths of the abyss.
[6]Over waves of the sea, over all the earth,
and over every people and nation I have held sway.
[7]Among all these I sought a resting place;
in whose territory should I abide?

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284. Deutsch, 1990, p23.
285. Scott, 1992, p53-54. He notes the Hebrew fragments found at Masada and Qumran whilst acknowledging that the only surviving complete copy of the book is in Greek.
286. Deutsch, 1990, p23.
287. In the context of verse three it is not stretching a point to interpret 'created' as 'spoken'.

The answer to this question is: in Jacob/Israel (verse eight) where Wisdom flourishes and ministers before God in the tabernacle with a priestly function[288] before settling in the Temple on Zion.

The role of Wisdom in Sirach is further developed, however, such that she is now identified with the Torah (verse twenty-three) in a phrase evocative of the finding of the Law in Josiah's reign followed by a citation from Deuteronomy 33:4 (in its Greek form).[289] Furthermore, Sirach describes Torah/Wisdom in language drawn from the account of Eden in Genesis:

> [25]It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom,
> and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits.
> [26]It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding,
> and like the Jordan at harvest time.
> [27]It pours forth instruction like the Nile,
> like the Gihon at the time of vintage.
> [28]The first man did not know wisdom fully,
> nor will the last one fathom her. (Sirach 24:25-28)

The role granted to Wisdom within Sirach is not only that of the creating agent, but also one of a presence within the history and development of Israel. Wisdom is to be found within the Torah which is the embodiment of Israel's relationship with God.[290] This is a bold move in Sirach which lies within the tradition of Psalm 19 and which can be viewed as a development of the notion that Wisdom communicates God to creation.[291] There are also echoes of the *logos* within Plato's *Republic*.[292]

Around 80 years later than Sirach[293], Baruch follows a similar theme in 3:9-4:4. Wisdom, although present within the world, is not found by any. However, she is given to Israel within the Torah (again referred to as the "commandments of life" and "the book of the commandments of God")[294] where she is the source of strength, understanding, light and life to those who follow her precepts.[295]

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288. Deutsch, 1990, p24, Murphy, 1985, pp10-11.
289. Deutsch, 1990, p23. See also Kee, 1993, p45.
290. Scott, 1992, p54.
291. Murphy, 1985, pp10-11.
292. Kee, 1993, p52.
293. Ringe suggests a date of late second, early first century BC. Ringe, 1999, p39.
294. Deutsch, 1990, pp24-25.

Coming nearer to the end of the first century BC,[296] there is a sustained treatment in the Wisdom of Solomon, in particular 6:12-9:18. Here, too, Wisdom "was present when you made the world" (7:9) but the passage does not speak of Wisdom seeking a home in the manner of Sirach or Baruch. Instead a picture is painted of Wisdom as some sort of manifestation of the divine[297] spoken of in the highest language in 7:25:

> For she is a breath of the power of God,
> and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty

Wisdom is the agent of creation (8:5-6) and God's Word and Wisdom are equated (9:1) as both are seen as such an agent. Moreover, she is God's glory (7:25-26) and is sent from the throne of God's glory (9:9) and is the one who "saves, creates and reveals".[298]

The Wisdom of Solomon portrays a reified Wisdom, especially in chapter seven where:

> Using the Stoic terms for the diffusion of the Logos as the World Soul, the author tells us that Lady Wisdom possesses an intelligent spirit (πνεῦμα νοερόν, 7:22) and "pervades and penetrates all things" (διήκει δὲ καὶ χωρεῖ διὰ πάντων, 7:24).[299]

It is worth noting that the Wisdom of Solomon is not entirely Stoic in its portrayal of Wisdom. God is portrayed as transcendent, whereas Stoicism favoured an immanent God.[300] As will be discussed below, there is a tendency to overlook Jewish roots for the development of a Word theology and to jump to a Stoic conclusion all too readily.

Of interest too is the tenth chapter wherein Wisdom is shown to be active within the history of Israel, guiding and rescuing the patriarchs. She is also identified with the pillars of God's presence in the Exodus[301] (verses seventeen and eighteen):

> [17]She gave to holy people the reward of their labors;
> she guided them along a marvelous way,

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295. Ringe, 1999, p39.
296. Scott, 1992, p55.
297. Ringe, 1999, p41.
298. Scott, 1992, p55.
299. Deutsch, 1990, p25.
300. Collins, 1977, p134.
301. Deutsch, 1990, p26.

and became a shelter (σκέπην) to them by day,
and a starry flame through the night.
[18]She brought them over the Red Sea,
and led them through deep waters

Here we have Wisdom not only operating as the presence of God within creation in such a way that divine transcendence is protected, but also being identified with some of the theophanic events during the Exodus. Here is Lady Wisdom playing a far greater role than simply being equated to the Torah.

c) The Rejected Wisdom

Things take a change, however, in later writings. Whilst Wisdom is treated in a similar manner, her fate is somewhat modified. In what Ringe calls something which "looks like a parody on Sirach 24 and Baruch 3:9-4:4",[302] Enoch 42 speaks of Wisdom returning to heaven after failing to find a suitable home, from whence Unrighteousness goes forth to dwell with men:

[1]Wisdom found no place where she might dwell;
Then a dwelling-place was assigned her in the heavens
[2]Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men,
And found no dwelling-place: Wisdom returned to her place,
And took her seat among the angels.
[3]And unrighteousness went forth from her chambers:
Whom she sought not she found,
And dwelt with them,
As rain in a desert
And dew on a thirsty land.

This sentiment (which looks like a dig at the establishment) is echoed in Matthew 8:20 (= Luke 9:58) where the Son of Man "has nowhere to lay his head" and there is good evidence that the Enoch tradition was known in Christian circles.

Wisdom does not find a home in the Torah after all, but rather found no place to dwell. There are echoes here of Proverbs 1:20-33:[303]

[29]Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,
[30]would have none of my counsel,
and despised all my reproof,

302. Ringe, 1999, p43. See also Deutsch, 1990, p28.
303. Deutsch, 1990, p28.

[31]therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way
and be sated with their own devices.

It has been suggested that the *Similitudes* of Enoch are late and, possibly, Christian.[304] It is significant that the book was not discovered amongst the texts of Qumran, but then neither was Esther. Greenfield and Stone list the reasons normally given for the absence of Esther: "(a) it existed but was not yet known at Qumran, (b) it was not yet accepted as canonical, (c) it was not considered worthy of study at Qumran, or (d) pure accident".[305] It is certainly true that there are parts of the *Similitudes* which would have proved unacceptable to the community at Qumran.[306]

One could add to the above list the fact that it would be naive to assume that the scrolls of Qumran lay undisturbed up until the events of the 1950s. There are suggestions that some scrolls were discovered at the site by Origen and the Patriarch of Seleucia knew of an Arab who had discovered books in Hebrew of the Old Testament and others in a cave while hunting in the region of Jericho.[307]

Even if the Similitudes of Enoch was absent from Qumran, the contents are not alien to the terminology contained within the sectarian writings found in that region.[308] Furthermore, the inclusion of Son of Man terminology would suggest a date before the suppression of this language in the writings of 4 Ezra around the end of the first century.[309] In fact the inclusion of Son of Man language may argue for a date prior to the Gospels since this phraseology would become less attractive to Jews when it becomes more widely applied to Jesus.[310]

There are two historical references within the *Similitudes* which would suggest a date

304. See, for example, Milik, 1971.
305. Greenfield & Stone, 1977, p55.
306. Greenfield & Stone, 1977, p56.
307. Barker, 1988, p13.
308. Greenfield & Stone, 1977, p56.
309. Greenfield & Stone, 1977, p57. Given the identification of Enoch with the Son of Man it is unlikely that this is a Christian theme.
310. Collins, 1999, p407.

at or around the beginning of the first century AD. The first comes in 56:5:

> And in those days the Angels shall return and hurl themselves to the east upon the Parthians and Medes: They shall stir up the kings so that a spirit of unrest shall come upon them, and they shall rouse them from their thrones, that they may break forth as lions from their lairs, and as hungry wolves among their flocks.

Although there have been attempts to give this a later referent, the passage most naturally refers to the invasion of Palestine in 40BC.[311] Certainly, this interpretation requires no exegetical gymnastics. The second passage is to be found at 67:8:

> But those waters shall in those days serve for the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those who dwell on the earth, for the healing of the body, but for the punishment of the spirit; now their spirit is full of lust, that they may be punished in their body, for they have denied the Lord of Spirits and see their punishment daily, and yet believe not in His name.

It would seem that this refers to the visit of Herod to the waters of Callirhoe which led to his disturbance before his death.[312] Given this, it seems appropriate to seek a date in the first century AD for the *Similitudes*. There is certainly growing scholarly support for this position.[313]

The final part, chronologically, of the developing narrative of Wisdom can be found in 2 Esdras 5:9-10, which paints a similarly gloomy picture:

> [9]Salt waters shall be found in the sweet, and all friends shall conquer one another; then shall reason hide itself, and wisdom shall withdraw into its chamber, [10]and it shall be sought by many but shall not be found, and unrighteousness and unrestraint shall increase on earth.

Wisdom withdraws into heaven, and it is in heaven that she remains within Philo's thinking. The tabernacle is a representation only of Wisdom, and, as will be seen below, it is the λόγος which goes into the world, carrying out many of the functions once attributed to Wisdom.[314] In Philo's thinking, then, the identification of Wisdom and Word has reached such a level that the Word is now an agent in the manner of

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311. Greenfield & Stone, 1977, p90.
312. Greenfield & Stone, 1977, p60. They cite Josephus: *Ant.* 17.6.5 §§4171-73; *J. W.* 1.33.5 §§4657- 58.
313. Bauckham, 1985, p317. See also Munoa III, 2002, p312, Black, Vanderkam & Neugebauer, 1985, pp183-189, Collins, 1987, p143,
314. Scott, 1992, p61.

Wisdom. Something of this identification of Wisdom with Word can also be seen in the *Wisdom of Solomon* which moves within its narrative from Wisdom (1:4; 9:4) to the λόγος (18:15).[315]

d) Conclusions

Although a developing narrative of Wisdom has been sketched out above, it would be misleading to imagine a single Wisdom theology within Judaism or to trace a documentary trail whereby a clear development of the theology can be set out. After all, in some Tannaitic literature we continue to see the Torah equated with Wisdom.[316] However, Wisdom did play an important role in the increasing stress upon the transcendence of God that can be discerned within the Second Temple period.

The second of the 'heavenly beings' to have its influence felt upon the New Testament is the Word.

III. The Word within Judaism

> The idea that the Logos/Sophia (and other variants as well) was the site of God's presence in the world—indeed of God's Word or Wisdom as a mediator figure—was a very widespread one in the thought-world of first-century and even second-century Judaism.[317]

Within Judaism, Logos theology is most closely associated with Philo, and with good reason. The striking nature of Philo's theology has not only led to his renown within the Patristic period, but has also resulted in him being seen as something of an anomaly. However, it is possible to see theology akin to Philo's within broader Judaism, both Hellenic and Aramaic.

a) Philo

Philo poses somewhat of a conundrum to those who study him. It is tempting to treat him as a unique thinker and relegate him to a parenthetical position within Jewish

315. Evans, 1993, p109.
316. Deutsch, 1990, p29.
317. Boyarin, 2001a, p248.

thought, much as Dunn does here: "*there does not seem to me to be any evidence in the literature of pre-Christian Judaism* (barring Philo for the moment) *of an 'emerging mythical configuration' centered on the Word (or Wisdom) of God*".[318]

This is not entirely fair, either to Philo or to first-century Judaism. His writings suggest that Logos theology is something already known to at least Alexandrian Jews, even if not in the precise form which Philo gives it.[319] Some have even commented upon the fact that the Logos of the prologue did not require any explanation to the readers of the Prologue which would suggest it was in common currency.[320]

In fact Philo's works not only betray a knowledge of other Alexandrian Jewish authors,[321] but other Jewish works of the period and following also show a familiarity with Philo,[322] as do those of pagan authors.[323] Philo may be better viewed as being at the forefront of his peers, rather than isolated from them. Certainly to view him as *sui generis* is misleading, and it is better to view him as one firmly within the Alexandrian milieu. The point of this is to muddy the waters somewhat and to suggest that Philo is not a sort of proto-Christian, but rather is taking part in the philosophical/theological discourse of his time. Middle-Platonism is not unusual in first-century Judaism and there are indications in the middle second century BC that the notion of the Logos was beginning to take hold in such a way that Philo is better viewed as a developer, not a pioneer.[324]

By way of an aside, it is worth noting that even the influence upon Philo's Logos

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318. Dunn, 1989, p220. Emphasis his.
319. Boyarin, 2001a, p249. He cites Winston, David (1985) *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press)
320. Ridderbos, 1997, p35. He cites Bultmann, 1971, p19. Assumed here is pre-history for the Logos within Christian circles, but the circles were rather more widely drawn. See also on this Barrett, 1978, p152.
321. Shroyer, 1936 gives a thorough discussion of this point. See also Sterling, 2003, pp260-1.
322. Sterling, 2003, pp261-263.
323. Sterling, 2003, p263.
324. Tobin, 1990, p256.

theology of Greek thought has been questioned, not least by Hannah who writes:

> neither in Platonism, Stoicism nor Aristotelian thought do we find the kind of significance that the concept has for Philo, nor the range of meanings that he gives to the term λόγος ... he appears to be dependent upon a tradition in Alexandrian Judaism which was attributing a certain independence to God's word.[325]

Philo's place within the affections of the church was such that he attained a status close to that of the Church Fathers[326] and this is not simply a view held within the early church. Even recently, Sterling has written: "the Philonic corpus is the single most important body of material from Second Temple Judaism for our understanding of the development of Christianity in the first and second centuries".[327]

The reasons for this warmth are clear enough. For Philo, the Logos provides the bridge between the concepts of the transcendent God and God the Father of his people. There are strong parallels in language, if not usage, with John et al.[328] Philo's thinking is well documented,[329] and Boyarin offers a succinct summary:

> Philo's Logos, jointly formed by the study of Greek philosophy and of the Torah, was at once the written text, an eternal notion in the mind of the Creator and the organ of his work in time and space. Under this last aspect, it receives such epithets as Son, King, Priest and Only-Begotten; in short it becomes a person.[330]

Moreover, it is worth noting that for Philo at least there are Old Testament sources for his Logos Theology as can be seen from this excerpt:

> ...nevertheless the scriptures present to us the words of God, to be actually visible to us like light; for in them it is said that, "*All people saw the voice of God*"; [Exodus 20:18] they do not say, "heard it," since what took place was not a beating of the air by means of the organs of the mouth and tongue, but a most exceedingly brilliant ray of virtue, not different in any respect from the source of reason, which also in another passage is spoken of in the following manner, "*Ye have seen that I spake unto you from out of Heaven*," [Exodus 20:22] not "Ye have heard," for the same reason. But there are passages where he distinguishes between what is heard and what is seen, and

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325. Hannah, 1999b, p80.
326. Runia, 1993, p3. See also Bruns, 1973.
327. Sterling, 2003, p252.
328. See Evans, 1993, pp101ff for a selected list of parallels between Philo and the John.
329. A good example being Dunn, 1989, pp220-228. See also the discussion in Dodd, 1953, p276ff for parallels between Philo's Logos and that of the Prologue. See also Lincoln, 2005, p95.
330. See also Boyarin, 2001a, p251.

> between the sense of seeing and that of hearing, as where he says, "*Ye have heard the sound of the words, but ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a Voice*;" [Deuteronomy 4:12] speaking here with excessive precision; for the discourse which was divided into nouns and verbs, and in short into all the different parts of speech, he has very appropriately spoken of as something to be heard; for in fact that is examined by the sense of hearing; but that which has nothing to do with either nouns or verbs, but is the voice of God, and seen by the eye of the soul, he very properly represents as visible.[331]

Philo links together the motifs of Logos, word and light which later find their home in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel,[332] as well as identifying the Logos with Wisdom.[333] In fact, Philo's exegesis provides parallels to the thought in the Prologue in those areas where the Logos imagery is developed further than existing Wisdom imagery. So, for example, the Logos is the agent of creation whereas elsewhere, Wisdom or the Word are portrayed as the instrument of creation[334] as can be seen in *Cherubim*: "that the instrument is the word of God, by means of which it was made", (ὄργανον δὲ λόγον θεοῦ δι᾽ οὗ κατεσκευάσθη). Moreover the Logos "is itself an image of God" (αὐτὸς εἰκὼν ὑπάρχων θεοῦ - *Flight 101*), but is unseen.

He would seem to be developing themes not too alien to Early Christianity.[335] Furthermore, commenting on the parallels between Philo and the Prologue, Tobin concludes: "that the hymn in the Prologue, like Philo of Alexandria, was part of the larger world of Hellenistic Jewish speculative interpretations of biblical texts".[336] This is especially important as there is no evidence for any dependence upon Philo in this Gospel[337] so, for instance, within Philo's extant writings the Logos does not take on flesh.[338] However, it is not difficult to envisage the Prologue taking themes that were developed or repeated in Philo's writings and then interpreting them in a manner whereby they illuminate the Christ event.

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331. *Migration 47-48. Emphasis mine*
332. Tobin, 1990, especially pp262-26.
333. Lincoln, 2005, 95. He cites *Flight* 97, 108-9; *Dreams*. 2.242, 245.
334. Evans, 1993, p103.
335. Boyarin, 2001a, p252.
336. Tobin, 1990, p268. Here he places Philo in far closer proximity to Alexandrian Judaism than Hurtado, 1998, p36.
337. Brown, 1971, pLVII. Lincoln, 2005, p95.
338. Evans, 1993, p104.

Whilst worship of the incarnate Logos may be a Christian mutation,[339] discussion of a *deuteros theos* is not.[340] Moreover, this would suggest that the Logos theology in the prologue is not so much a sign and symbol of the separation of Jews and Christians, but is of a piece with Jewish thought. It is the taking of flesh by the logos which is the real defining moment.

There is some evidence that this thinking on the part of Philo is not unique, as development of this theology can be witnessed within Aramaic Judaism too, as will be seen from a consideration of the Targumim and in particular their treatment of the Memra.[341] As has been stated above, there is no desire here to suggest that the Targumim are contemporaneous with the Gospel communities. Onqelos is certainly later, and whilst it *may* be possible to date Neofiti to this period, it is not possible to do so with absolute certainty.

The use of the Targumim in this connection is one of corroboration. If they can be seen to contain traditions which are present within writings earlier than the New Testament then they would suggest that these traditions endure throughout that period. The Gospel writes would be likely to be aware of these traditions since they can be shown to exist both before and after their period of activity.

Moreover, it is probable that the Targumim contain earlier traditions. To rely on a Targum as a single source for a tradition is to run the risk of anachronism. To use the Targumim to provide secondary evidence of a tradition which can be shown to pre-exist them is less dangerous.

b) The Memra in the Targumim

A cursory look at the Targumim themselves reveals a role for the Memra, as can be seen in the following table in which a smattering of examples from Targum Onqelos

339. To borrow language from Hurtado. Hurtado, 2003
340. Boyarin, 2001a, p257, n53. This should not be interpreted as setting Boyarin up against Hurtado as they are broadly in agreement.
341. Of considerable use here is Boyarin, 2001a. This is not a new idea and precursors are discussed in Anderson, 1990, p27, n14.

are given:

Text	MT	Targum Onqelos
Genesis 3:8	They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.	Then the heard the voice of the Memra of the Lord God walking in the garden towards the decline of the day; so adam and his wife hid themselves from before the Lord God within a tree of the Garden.
Genesis 6:6	And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.	then the Lord regretted through his Memra that He had made man on earth, and He was determined to break their power according to His will.
Genesis 9:12	God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:	Then the Lord said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I set between My Memra and (between) you and (between) every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations.
Genesis 15:6	And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.	And the trusted the Memra of the Lord, and He considered it for him as a meritorious deed.
Exodus 3:12	He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.”	So He said, “For My Memra will support you and this will be to you a sign that I have sent you - when you bring out the people from Egypt, they will worship before the Lord on this mountain.

In addition, there are some revealing examples in the Palestinian Targum (Neofiti);[342]

342. See also the list in Boyarin, 2001a, pp256-7.

Text	MT	Targum
Genesis 1:3-4	[3]Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. [4]And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.	And the Memra of the Lord said: “Let there be light”; and there was light according to the decree of his Memra And it was manifest before the Lord that the light was good; and the Memra of the Lord separated the light from the darkness.
Genesis 1:27-28	[27]So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. [28]God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; ...	And the Memra of the Lord created the man in his (own) likeness; in a likeness from before the Lord he created him; male and his partner he created them. And the Glory of the Lord blessed them, and the Memra of the Lord said to them: “Be strong and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it;...
Genesis 16:13	So she named the LORD who spoke to her, “You are El-roi”;	And she prayed in the name of the Memra of the Lord who was revealed to her: “You are the God who sustains all ages; for she said: “Behold also now he has been revealed to me after he has been revealed to me mistress Sarai.
Genesis 17:1	When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.	When Abram was ninety-nine year, the Memra of the Lord was revealed to Abram and said to him: “I am the God of the heavens. Serve before me in truth and be perfect in good work.
Genesis 17:3	Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him,	And Abram prostrated himself upon his face and the Memra of the Lord spoke with him saying
Exodus 14:30	Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.	And on that day the Memra of the Lord redeemed and delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptians; and the Israelites sat the Egyptians dead, cast upon the shore of the sea.

Leviticus 22:33	I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD.	"I am the Lord who sanctified you, who redeemed you and brought you out redeemed from the land of Egypt to be to you in my Memra, a redeeming God. I am the Lord who redeemed your fathers, and I am eventually to redeem you".

There are those who would object that the Memra, Shekinah et al are merely terms used to avoid accusations of anthropomorphisms when God is spoken of as appearing, creating, saving and so on.[343] Yet, it is hard to see quite how this is so since it is either God or a hypostasized entity such as the Memra who is doing the actions.[344] If an action takes place, then one has to ask; by whom? Dodd has noted that within Hebrew thought, a word once uttered had "a kind of substantive existence of its own" which belies at least a "habitual tendency of thought to attribute to the spoken word an existence and activity of its own"[345]. This view has been challenged by Thiselton with respect to the Biblical curses and blessings,[346] yet when it comes to divine speech the issue is not so much the effectiveness of the words, but the source of the 'power'. In other words the power, Thistleton argues, would not be linguistic but divine.[347] Yet, the question still stands: is it God or the Memra who does the act? The Memra may not have power qua linguistics, but its divine origin would give it power to act. Moreover, within Philo one might see precisely the hypostasis being objected to above:

> Why is it that he speaks as if of some other god, saying that he made man after the image of God, and not that he made him after his own image? Very appropriately and without any falsehood was this oracular sentence uttered by God, for no mortal thing could have been formed on the similitude of the supreme Father of the universe, but only after the pattern of the second deity, who is the Word of the supreme Being; since it is fitting that the rational soul of man should bear in it the type of the divine Word; since in his first Word God is superior to the most rational possible nature.[348]

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343. See, for example, Dunn, 1989, p217-220. Here he is writing of the LXX and OT. See also Hurtado, 1998, p47.
344. A point made by Boyarin. Boyarin, 2001a, p255.
345. Dodd, 1953, p264. As examples he cites Isaiah 40:10-11 and Wisdom 18:15-16.
346. Thiselton, 1974.
347. See also the brief discussion in , p241.
348. *Q.G.* 2.62.

So it is that, for Philo, Adam is created in the image of the Logos.[349] A second passage uses similar language:

> And even if there be not as yet any one who is worthy to be called a son of God, nevertheless let him labour earnestly to be adorned according to his first-born word, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for he is called, the authority, and the name of God, and the Word, and man according to God's image, and he who sees Israel.[350]

Evans argues that Philo's writings can meet the objection that the language employed by the Targumim is periphrastic.[351] Whether or not he is overstating the case, it remains the fact that the textual milieu created by and reflected in Philo is suggestive of a level of hypostatisation.

To return to the Targumim, it would appear that the Memra fulfils a somewhat complex function, and it would be better to avoid a notion of a consistent theological idea behind its usage, but rather speak of "a theological *manner* of speaking of God".[352]

The Targumim do appear to have "traces of anthropomorphism" which would suggest that it was more widespread in the traditions which formed them.[353] There would appear to be aspects of an independency within the actions of the Memra, all the more so if one looks outside of Neofiti as the following examples illustrate:[354]

> My Word (מימר) loathed you just as the Lord loathed Sodom and Gomorrah (*Tg. Hab.* 1.12)
>
> I let myself be entreated through my Word (מימר) by those who did not inquire of me ... by a people who do not pray in my name (*Tg. Isa.* 65:1)

This independency is mirrored in *Neofiti* too: "Then Abraham worshipped and

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349. Hurtado, 1998, p45. One should note that Hurtado feels it is ''doubtful that Logos and other divine powers amount to anything more than ways of describing God and his activities".
350. *Confusion* 28 §146.
351. Evans, 1993, pp123ff.
352. Chilton, 1989, p131. It should be noted that Chilton does nuance this view by observing that Neophiti and Pseudo-Jonathan do "evince patterns of usage" and the Memra is not used "haphazardly" whenever a speaking verb is linked to God.
353. Bernstein, 1986, p69.
354. Evans, 1993, p127f. His translations are used for the examples.

prayed in the name of the Word (מימרה) of the Lord and said...".

The result of all of this is that the suggestion that the Logos theology of Philo is unique to him, or his Greek milieu, is capable of a strong challenge. This is not to suggest a direct equivalence between Philo's Logos and the Memra of the Targumim,[355] but rather that there is a common notion of the word of God, not least in creation, having some additional dimension.

The presence of this treatment of the Memra within the Targumim serves to bolster the view that Philo is not in a vacuum. It is true, as discussed above, that the dating of the Targumim is problematic but the presence of this theme *alongside the treatment of the Logos in Philo* would suggest that the tradition which is later seen in the Targumim exists within Philo's time.

c) The Memra and the Prologue: A Caution

It is clear from the literature surrounding the prologue to John that there is little enthusiasm for seeing in the Memra of the Targumim a background for the Logos. Barrett calls such a view a "blind alley"[356] and many argue that there is no hypostasization.[357] One might demur, but even if such a view is correct then a flat rejection of the influence of the Targumim upon John is not justified. There is broad acceptance that the 'Parting of the Ways' was a gradual process, as has been discussed above, and the Targumim would form part of the background to the Christological speculation within early Christianity. If the Prologue develops the Memra material to produce a hypostasized Memra, then the Targumim can still remain the background to this. To stress the point: if, after all, one concludes that there really is not a hypostasization of the Memra within the Targumim, that does not mean that the Prologue does not take a nascent theme and develop it in light of the understanding of Christ of the Johannine community.

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355. "The error is magnified to immensity when memra is connected with the Logos of Philo". Moore, 1922, p54.
356. Barrett, 1978, p153.
357. e.g Hurtado, 1998, p36.

Moreover, it should be stressed that it is not being argued that Neofiti predates John or earlier parts of the New Testament. However, it should be admitted that the written Targumim have an earlier oral tradition, and that tradition would in all likelihood be known to Aramaic speaking Jews. The similarities between Philo and parts of the Targum would suggest that views which are seen as uniquely Philonic may well be represented elsewhere within the Jewish culture.

As with the Greek scriptures, the Targumim can be seen as preserving an earlier interpretative tradition. Whilst it must be admitted that these traditions are edited, or suppressed, in the later written forms, where elements of tradition cohere with what is known of Second Temple Judaism, there is a likelihood that these traditions can be dated to that period.

IV. The Voice of God

The Voice of God is a little discussed 'heavenly being'. Whilst there is some discussion of the Voice in Revelation,[358] its role within the Old Testament has only been given sustained attention by Yadin, and he only considers the Hebrew background. As a result, he engages with a narrower range of texts than will be dealt with below.[359] Cohen has given a brief narrative treatment of the development of the Voice within the Old Testament, but it is unreferenced.[360] Charlesworth has given some consideration to the Voice as portrayed in Revelation, drawing upon intertestamental literature as a background as well as a brief discussion of Genesis 3:8.[361]

In his consideration of the theme, Yadin asserts that the MT has passed through a

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358. e.g. Boring, 1992, Charlesworth, 1986.
359. He considers Numbers 7:89, Ezekiel 43:6, 2:2, 1:24-26, 9:1 and Exodus 19-24 (in that order).
360. Cohen, 2005.
361. Charlesworth, 1986. The Pseudepigraphal books he considers are the Apocalypse of Sedrach, Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, Apocalypse of Shem and Apocalypse of Abraham. Of these only the latter is possibly contemporaneous with the later New Testament. However, the presence of the theme within the later literature does show that it did endure through the New Testament period.

theologically motivated editing[362] and that the *Vorlage* of the Greek Scriptures is far more comfortable with the concept of hypostasization,[363] for which he, drawing on McBride, offers the following definition:

> a quality, epithet, attribute, manifestation or the like of a deity which through a process of personification and differentiation has become a distinct (if not fully independent) divine being in its own right.[364]

When traced through the Old Testament it can be seen that the Voice of God has a particular relevance for the portrayal of Christ and the understanding of the manner and nature of the Incarnation. These implications will be drawn out when the New Testament writings are considered below.

a) The Voice in the Garden (Genesis 3:8)

The first mention of the voice of God comes within Genesis and the narrative of Eden:

MT

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּגָּן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן

> They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

LXX

καὶ ἤκουσαν τὴν φωνὴν κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ περιπατοῦντος ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τὸ δειλινόν καὶ ἐκρύβησαν ὅ τε Αδαμ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ παραδείσου

> And they heard the sound [voice] of the Lord God walking about in the orchard in the evening, and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God in the midst of the timber of the orchard.

362. Yadin, 2003, p602.

363. cf Yadin, 2003, p608.

364. Yadin, 2003, p601. A definition proposed by S Dean McBride in "The Deuteronomic Name Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1969), 5, quoted in John T. Strong, "God's Kabod: The Presence of Yahweh in the Book of Ezekiel," in The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectices (ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong; SBLSymS 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 72.

Targum Onqelos[365]

וּשְׁמַעוּ יָת קָל מֵימְרָא דַיוי אֱלֹהִים מְהַלֵּיךְ בְּגִינְתָּא לְמִנַּח יוֹמָא וְאִיטְמַר אָדָם וְאִיתְּתֵיהּ מִן־קֳדָם יוי אֱלֹהִים בְּגוֹ אִילָן גִּינְתָּא

Then they heard the voice of the Memra of the Lord God walking in the garden towards the decline of the day; so adam and his wife hid themselves from before the Lord God within a tree of the Garden.

Targum Neofiti

ושמעו ית קל ממרה דיי אלהים מהלך בגו גנתאה למשב יומא ואטמר אדם ואתתה מן־קדם יי אלהים בגוא אלני גנתה

And they heard the sound of the Memra of the Lord God walking within the garden at the breeze of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the before the Lord God within the trees of the garden.

The pertinent question in all of this is one of translation: should קל be rendered as voice or sound? The theological import of the question is not a minor one: is the author trying to portray the LORD God walking in the garden (and hence noise is heard) or, rather, is the reader to understand that the voice of God is walking. Given that this passage is most commonly thought of as belonging to the J strand, it could be argued that the first option is more reflective of the Anthropomorphic tendencies of that tradition. The King James Version translates with the latter sense, but it is the consensus of modern translations that the pair in Eden heard the "noise" of God walking in the Garden.

Turning to earlier translations we find that the compilers of the Targumim have interpolated 'Word' into the sentence (thereby explicating the ambiguity). Of course this tells us little of the intention which lies behind the original text of Genesis, but it does give a clue as to the understanding of the passage during the late Second Temple and post Temple period and suggests a degree of hypostasization which would support translating קל as voice. The use of ממרה (memra) further reinforces this translation as it clearly lies within the same semantic domain and it is an easy step to reconstruct some understanding of the Word of Genesis 1 (see above) walking in the garden of Eden too.

365. The translations of the Targumim are taken from the Aramaic Bible series.

The witness of the Septuagint is important here, too. Within Genesis the construction φωνὴ κυρίου (voice of God) only occurs on one other occasion, 15:4, which is best translated as the voice of God and is discussed below. Within Exodus there is one occurrence at 15:26, after Miriam's song:

> And he said, "If you by paying attention listen to the voice of the Lord (τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου), your God, and do before him pleasing things, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, every disease which I brought upon the Egyptians, I will not bring upon you. For I am the Lord who heals you."

This text is best understood as referring to the Sinai theophany which is also discussed below, but for now it will do to note that there is evidence of the voice of God within that event.

There are many more occurrences of the phrase within Numbers,[366] with the vast majority referring back to the Sinai theophany by use of the phrase διὰ φωνῆς κυρίου which mirrors the עַל־פִּי יְהוָה (according to the mouth[367] of the LORD) of the MT. The genitive coupled with διά gives a sense of agency (or, less likely, that these words were spoken during a period of activity of the voice of God) and serves to place a distinction between the source of the revelation at Sinai and the means by which it was delivered. Again, there is some sense of a distinction between the LORD and the voice of the LORD. The voice of the LORD appears to be the mediating agency by which God's expression is manifested to Moses. Transcendence is preserved.

The only occurrence of φωνῆς κυρίου without διά is in Numbers 7:89, which will be discussed below. There Moses speaks with the voice.

Within Deuteronomy φωνῆς κυρίου occurs 15 times.[368] In all but two of these verses the phrase comes as part of a cipher meaning to obey the law (i.e. to hear the

366. Numbers 3:16, 39, 51; 4:37, 41, 45, 49; 7:89; 9:20; 10:13; 13:3
367. This is normally rendered according to the "word of the Lord", or the "commandment of the Lord".
368. Deuteronomy 5:25; 8:20; 13:19; 15:5; 18:16; 26:14; 27:10; 28:1-2, 9, 15, 45, 62; 30:8, 10

voice which spoke at Sinai). The exceptions are two related verses, the first being 5:25 which is here quoted in context (LXX):

> [5:23]And it happened, when you heard the voice from the midst of the fire and the mountain was burning with fire, that you approached me, all the leaders of your tribes and your council of elders, [24]and you said, "Look, the Lord our God has shown us his glory, and we have heard his voice from the midst of the fire. This day we have seen that God will speak to a person, and he will live. [25]And now let us not die. For this great fire will consume us; if we continue to hear *the voice of the Lord our God* any longer, then we will die. [26]For what flesh, which has heard the voice of the living God when he speaks from the midst of fire, as we have, shall also live?[369]

This verse contains the first mention of φωνῆς κυρίου within Deuteronomy and sets the context for the other occurrences of the phrase within the book. The theophany at Sinai is referred to and the awesome experience highlighted. The voice of God is identified with the lawgiving and coupled with an experience to evoke the fear of the Lord.

The second verse, 18:16, is contained within the passage where another prophet like Moses is promised and cites the passage above.

It can be seen that the phrase φωνῆς κυρίου consistently has the meaning 'voice of God' and not 'sound of God' throughout the Pentateuch and would therefore be the best translation of the phrase in Genesis 3:8. Of course, there is the issue of the differing translation techniques for each book within the Pentateuch but the only other instance of the phrase within Genesis carries the meaning of voice. The witness of the other books is secondary, but useful nonetheless.

Further, although later, witness to this reading can be found in Irenaeus, writing of the Father:

> But who is this Being? Is He some unknown one, and a Father who gives no commandment to any one? Or is He the God who is proclaimed in the Scriptures, to whom we were debtors, having transgressed His commandment? Now the commandment was given to man by the Word. For Adam, it is said, "heard the voice

369. There is a careful distinguishing of the voice of God and the fire of the theophany and the possible motives for this are discussed below in connection with Exodus 19-20.

of the Lord God."[370]

He then later in that chapter goes on to write, whilst discussing Christ:

> And when He had said this, He commanded the paralytic man to take up the pallet upon which he was lying, and go into his house. By this work of His He confounded the unbelievers, and showed that He is Himself the voice of God, by which man received commandments, which he broke, and became a sinner; for the paralysis followed as a consequence of sins.

The passage bears witness to the translation of voice in Genesis 3:8 and, as such, provides evidence for such a reading in the late second century. What is more, Irenaeus does not feel the need to defend or even expand his exegesis of Genesis 3:8 which would suggest that such a reading is well known. Given that he is writing in opposition to other parties one would expect some defence of his position if it was deemed to be at all controversial.

A similar reading to that of Irenaeus is given by his near contemporary, Theophilus of Antioch. After quoting from the passage, he writes:

> You will say, then, to me: "You said that God ought not to be contained in a place, and how do you now say that He walked in Paradise?" Hear what I say. The God and Father, indeed, of all cannot be contained, and is not found in a place, for there is no place of His rest; but His Word, through whom He made all things, being His power and His wisdom, assuming the person of the Father and Lord of all, went to the garden in the person of God, and conversed with Adam. For the divine writing itself teaches us that Adam said that he had heard the voice. But what else is this voice but the Word of God, who is also His Son?[371]

That there is a tradition of translating the קוֹל יְהוָה as φωνῆς κυρίου within the Greek scriptures is clear, and the evidence points to this translation being the accepted norm within the second century too. It would seem safe to conclude that during the period of the compilation of the Gospels that this translation, if not the theological interpretation evinced in the second century, was current.

Before continuing, it should also be noted that the walking of God in the garden is

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370. *Haer* 5.17.1

371. *Autol.* 22. For a discussion on Theophilus' Christology and *Autol.* see Curry, 1988.

not simply in response to Adam and Eve's actions. Hamilton notes that walking (מִתְהַלֵּךְ - a type of Hithpael) "suggests iterative and habitual aspects".[372] The walking of God in chapter three of Genesis has resonances later within the narrative of the history of Israel. הלך (walk) is used in connection with the "divine presence" within the tabernacle (Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 23:15), and the LORD walks in both Eden and the tabernacle in the same manner. The prophecy received by Nathan in 1 Chronicles 17:6 serves to underline the imagery:

> In all places where I have moved [הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי] with all Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"

Given all of this, and to return to the question asked at the beginning of the consideration of this passage, it would seem that the consistent witness of the Septuagint is that the "voice of God" translation is the most natural one. This does raise questions as to the "walking" of a Voice, but it should be acknowledged that hypostatic portrayals of attributes of the LORD are well attested. The Greek Scriptures portray something not alien to Second Temple thought. At worst, it provides the basis for such an understanding within the Christian community.

b) The Voice and Abram (Genesis 15:4)

The second of the episodes containing the Voice of God comes in Genesis 15 and the promise to Abram. As with theophany generally, this appearance marks a significant event in the development of the covenant, marking its initiation.

MT

וְהִנֵּה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר לֹא יִירָשְׁךָ זֶה כִּי־אִם אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֵּעֶיךָ הוּא יִירָשֶׁךָ

> But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir."

LXX

καὶ εὐθὺς φωνὴ θεου ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγων οὐ κληρονομήσει σε οὗτος ἀλλ᾽ ὃς ἐξελεύσεται ἐκ σοῦ οὗτος κληρονομήσει σε

> And immediately a divine voice came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who shall come out of you, he shall be your heir."

372. Hamilton, 1990, p192.

Targum Onqelos

וְהָא פִּתְגָמָא דַיוי עִמֵּיה לְמֵימַר לָא יֵירִתִינָךְ דֵין אֱלָהֵין בַּר דְתוֹלֵיד הוּא יֵירִתִינָךְ

Whereupon the word of the Lord was with him, saying, “That one will not inherit you, but rather a son whom you will begat, he will inherit you.”

Targum Neofiti

והא פתגם דנבו מן־קדם ייי על אברם למימר לא ירת יתך דן ארום אלהן מן דיפוק מן מעיך הוא ירת יתך

And behold a word of prophecy from before the Lord was upon Abram saying: “This one will not be your heir, but only he who comes from your own bowels will be your heir.”

There is a significant disagreement between the versions, with the Septuagint departing from the more usual prophetic formulation of “the word of the LORD came to him”. Moreover, this verse is of particular interest since the voice described therein acts in a decidedly hypostasized manner in the subsequent verse when the word/voice brought Abram outside and showed him the heavens before promising descendants as numerous as the stars. Abram then “believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness” (v6).

There are therefore two significant factors here: first the word/voice acts in a way which is clearly different from the word (דבר) which comes to the prophets. In those instances the “word” operates in the manner of inspiration or vision and often the content is then relayed to the hearers of the prophet. There is no hypostasization in these instances. In the encounter with the voice of the Lord above, however, Abram is taken outside and shown stars. The language is not simply that of vision or inspiration, but something more tangible is in view.

It will be noted that the MT and Onqelos translate the passage by using the more usual “Word of the LORD” formula but it is clear from the text that there is more hypostasization than is the case for the words received by those prophets. The Targumim vary slightly but both use פתגם, which is similarly used in prophetic language.[373] Neofiti uses a more curious wording: “a word of prophecy from before

373. Moore, 1922, p45f.

the Lord was upon Abram", a phrase echoed from the first verse of the chapter. The language here is more hypostatic and the 'word' is portrayed as having a separate identity. Given the fact that the MT tends towards de-hypostasization and that Onqelos gained acceptance in Rabbinic Judaism it would be tempting to see Neofiti as giving an early tradition as to the text. In any case it reflects more ease with hypostasization.

In contrast to these traditions, the Greek has the voice of God coming to Abram, a phrase which is evocative of the voice in Eden as discussed above. It would seem, therefore, that the Greek is consciously distinguishing between the more usual prophetic 'word' and that which appears to Abram and which takes him outside. This usage of the "Voice of God" rather than 'the word' renders the passage no less significant given the rich theme of the Voice of God within the Old Testament.

The second noteworthy aspect of this passage is that Abram's belief in the voice/ word is equated with belief in the LORD (v.6), which in turn is reckoned to Abram as righteousness. Clearly this is an important verse within the early Christian community as Paul's letter to the Romans and the Epistle of James demonstrate, and it is significant that they both follow the Greek text.[374]

The significance of this passage for the end of John 8 will be dealt with more fully below. That this passage was known to the early Church with 'the Voice' (as opposed to 'Word') can be seen in Justin's *Dialogue*: "For, just as he believed the voice of God, and was thereby justified...".[375]

c) The Voice at Sinai (Exodus 19-20)

As Sommer has remarked, the account of the theophany in Exodus is "full of ambiguities, gaps, strange repetitions, and apparent contradictions"[376] and it is hard to unravel a sequence of events. As such it has provided rich pickings for source critics

374. In the Göttingen system, the b group of manuscripts.
375. *Dialogue*, 119.6.
376. Sommer, 1999, p426. See also Yadin, 2003, p617.

whose task and historicism is clearly anachronistic for those in the first century for whom the ambiguities provide a fertile ground for interpretation. Such an interpretative approach can be seen in Philo:

> [T]he scriptures present to us the words of God, to be actually visible to us like light; for in them it is said that, "All people saw the voice of God"; they do not say, "heard it," since what took place was not a beating of the air by means of the organs of the mouth and tongue, but a most exceedingly brilliant ray of virtue, not different in any respect from the source of reason, which also in another passage is spoken of in the following manner, "Ye have seen that I spake unto you from out of Heaven," not "Ye have heard," for the same reason.[377]

Philo here refers to Exodus 20:18, and his use of the singular "voice" is at odds with the MT which has אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִם and is therefore normally rendered: "thunder and lightning".[378] Onqelos (the parallel is at 20:15) uses the plural קָלַיָּא and Neofiti similarly uses the plural. Philo is clearly making use of the Greek scriptures,[379] which read: τὴν φωνὴν. Yadin has argued that the Greek text is a more reliable witness than the MT.[380] His reasons being:

i) The singular, with its suggestion of the auditory being visible, is the more difficult reading and cannot be taken as a harmonizing gloss

ii) The singular 'voice' would not necessitate הַלַּפִּידִם being translated as lightning, which is unattested elsewhere[381].

iii) It is the *lectio difficilior.*

Evidence for a singular voice as opposed to a plural noises/thunder can be found earlier within Exodus. At 19:19 there is an earlier mention of this voice:[382]

> As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder.

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377. Philo, *Migration*, 47. This sentiment can be found elsewhere in Philo's writings. "And all the people beheld the voice most evidently." For the truth is that the voice of men is calculated to be heard; but that of God to be really and truly seen. Why is this? Because all that God says are not words, but actions which the eyes determine on before the ears." *Decalogue* 47.
378. As in, for example, the NRSV, ESV, NIV, KJV.
379. Philo's knowledge of Hebrew is debated, but it could be possible he is working with a proto-MT *Vorlage*.
380. Yadin, 2003, p621.
381. He comments that there "is a broad consensus among the ancient translators that לפידים means not "flashes of lightning" but "torches". Yadin, 2003, p621.
382. Sommer, 1999, p428, Yadin, 2003, p617f.

The NRSV cited above has chosen to translate בְּקוֹל as "in thunder", but this is not a universally accepted translation. The ESV follows suit, but the NIV has: "Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him" and the KJV similarly translates קול as voice. If one were to compare the different versions, one would discover that the Greek has Μωυσῆς ἐλάλει ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ φωνῇ ("Moyses was speaking, and God answered him with sound") whereas one would expect to find the plural if thunder was intended. The Targumim similarly use the singular.

It is hard to justify a translation of thunder in this instance. There is no meteorological context, save in verse 16 and in that instance the plural is used (קֹלֹת/ φωναί). It would be incongruous to use the plural in one instance and the singular in the next. Moreover the context of verse 19 is that of Moses speaking, and it would be natural to expect the singular קול/φωνή of God's answering to mean voice.[383]

Accepting, then, the most likely translation of voice, the question is raised: why does the writer feel the need to say that God answered *with a voice*?[384] One would expect a comment on the nature of communication if it were unusual, but why comment on the fact that speech is conveyed by a voice? If this passage is taken in conjunction with Exodus 20:18 (which many argue originally followed on from 19:19)[385] it is easy to conceive of the voice acting as a mediatory figure, akin to Wisdom. We have, therefore, a tradition of the voice (and not noises) being present at Sinai.

An early commentary on this passage is, of course, the Deuteronomistic recounting of the event in Deuteronomy 4:12:

MT

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ קוֹל דְּבָרִים אַתֶּם שֹׁמְעִים וּתְמוּנָה אֵינְכֶם רֹאִים זוּלָתִי קוֹל

Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice.

383. For more on this, and a discussion of the morphology, see Yadin, 2003, pp620-621 and Sommer, 1999.
384. A pertinent question posed by Yadin. Yadin, 2003, p619.
385. See, for example, Phillips, 1984, p290f.

LXX

καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐκ μέσου τοῦ πυρός φωνὴν ῥημάτων ὑμεῖς ἠκού σατε καὶ ὁμοίωμα οὐκ εἴδετε ἀλλ᾽ ἢ φωνήν

And the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words but you did not notice a likeness, only a voice.

Targum Onqelos

וּמַלֵּיל יוי עִמְכוֹן מִגּוֹ אִישָׁתָא קָל פִּתְגָמִין אַתּוּן שָׁמְעִין וּדְמוּ לֵיתֵיכוֹן חָזַן אֶלָהֵין קָלָא

Then the Lord spoke with you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you perceived no form, only a voice.

Targum Neofiti

ומליל ייי עמכון מן גו להבי אשתה קול דבירי אתון שמעין ודמו לית אתון חמיין ארום אלהן קל ממריה

And the Lord spoke with us from the midst of the flames of fire. You heard the voice of his utterence but you did not see a likeness, only the voice of his Memra

The reformulation of the Exodus account in Deuteronomy often serves to make clear ambiguities in the Exodus text.[386] In this instance it serves to confirm that the people heard a voice, and not simply thunder or a noise. There is an emphasis within this passage that no form was seen, a theme that is reinforced by a prohibition on the making of images in the following verse.[387] There is also an insistence that it was the voice that was seen and the lack of any surrounding meteorological phenomena rules out a 'thunder' translation. Thus the 'voice' is a phenomenon to be identified at Sinai which goes onto confirm the decalogue (v. 13) to the people.

In the next chapter we find another reference to the voice of God:

[22]These words the LORD spoke with a loud voice to your whole assembly at the mountain, out of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, and he added no more. He wrote them on two stone tablets, and gave them to me. [23]When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you approached me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders; [24]and you said, "Look, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the fire. Today we have seen that God may speak to someone and the person may still live. [25]So now why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the *voice of the LORD* our God any longer, we shall die. [26]For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and remained alive? [27]Go near, you yourself, and hear all that the LORD our God will say. Then tell us

386. Sommer, 1999, p432.

387. NIcholson, 1977, p424

everything that the LORD our God tells you, and we will listen and do it."
(Deuteronomy 5:22-27)

It is worth noting that in Deuteronomy 4:12 the language is somewhat strange. The lack of verb in the final clause implies that the voice was seen rather than heard: "you did not see a likeness/form, only a voice". Neither can it be that the verb at the beginning of the sentence is carried forward as the subject changes in all four of the witnesses above. The Israelites heard the "sound of words/divine speech" but saw "the voice [of the Word]". The verse is split into two halves with the first describing what was heard, and the latter what was seen. One would expect to see a repeating of the verb if it was to be understood that the voice was heard too, especially in a book such as Deuteronomy which seeks to clarify rather than obfuscate.

d) The Voice in the Tabernacle (Numbers 7:89)

A further early commentary on the events of the Exodus can be found in Numbers. 7:89 reads:

When Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with him, he heard the voice speaking (מדבר) to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.

The verse closes the section of Numbers which describes the offerings made "when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle" (verse one). It describes the gifts of wagons and oxen for "the service of the tent of meeting" (verse five) before detailing the offerings the leader of each tribe brought to the dedication of the altar. It is after these offerings are totalled that the verse above occurs.

Most modern translations feel the need to interpolate "the Lord" in the first clause of this verse, yet this reading is not warranted by the texts where Moses simply goes in to speak with 'him'. The only mention of the "LORD" within the chapter occurs some eighty verses earlier and to seek to carry forward an object that far is simply not feasible. The following verse is an introductory formula "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying..." which would preclude the "LORD" being read back.[388] Rather

388. Yadin, 2003, p603.

verse eighty-nine must be allowed to be read as it is, with the 'voice' being the assumed object of the first clause.

Yadin has made note of the text of *Sifre Numbers* at this point[389] which, he concludes, interprets the verse as showing the presence of "the Voice". His conclusions bear reproducing.:

> At this point it should be emphasized that the best reading of the biblical text is not at question here. I am arguing that a close reading of Num 7:89 reveals that it *may* be read as asserting the presence of a mediating voice in the Tent of Meeting. The next step is to argue that this is in fact the reading of the *Sifre Numbers*, a claim borne out by the gloss that concludes the *derashah*: "Scripture relates that Moses would enter into the Tent of Meeting and stand there, *and the Voice descended from highest heavens to between the Cherubs*, and he heard the Voice speaking to him from within." To gloss the gloss, the *Sifre Numbers* relates that Moses did not hear God in the Tent of Meeting but "the Voice," that had "descended from the highest heavens" upon Moses' entrance into the Tent.[390]

Sifre Numbers was redacted in the third century but the traditions it passes on are attributed to second century figures.[391] Whilst later than the New Testament period, it does show that the notion of a hypostasized voice survived into the Rabbinic period, which suggests its durability.

Dozeman draws attention to the similarities between Numbers 7:89 and Exodus 34:34 in the MT[392]:

Exodus 34:34	וּבְבֹא מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ
Numbers 7:89	וּבְבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ

This similarity is present in the Targumim too:

Exodus 34:34 (Onqelos)	וְכַד עָלֵיל מֹשֶׁה לקדם יוי לְמַלָּלָא עִמֵּיה
Numbers 7:89 (Onqelos)	וְכַד עָלֵיל מֹשֶׁה לְמַשׁכַן זִמנָא לְמַלָּלָא עִמֵּיה
Exodus 34:34 (Neofiti)	וכד הוה משה עליל קדם ייי למללה עמה
Numbers 7:89 (Neofiti)	וכד הוה משה עלל למשכן זימנא לממללה עמיה

389. Yadin, 2002.
390. Yadin, 2002, p397f. Emphasis his. He does argue for the best reading of the biblical text being a hypostasized voice in Yadin, 2003.
391. Yadin, 2003, p604.
392. Dozeman, 2000, p41-45.

Exodus 34:34	ἡνίκα δ᾽ ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο Μωυσῆς ἔναντι κυρίου λαλεῖν αὐτῷ
Numbers 7:89	ἐν τῷ εἰσπορεύεσθαι Μωυσῆν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου λαλῆσαι αὐτῷ

The Septuagint has less agreement, which may be a consequence of the differing translation techniques of the various books of the Pentateuch. The translator of Numbers has been characterized as "at times careless or inaccurate, but he can also be skilful in carrying out his task, with successful attempts to achieve consistency and to harmonize passages he is rendering".[393] The lack of lexical correlation in this instance does not serve to undermine the general point.

This similarity may account for the curious nature of the first clause of verse 89 as the redactor is drawing upon the Exodus material[394] and seeking to draw links between the two accounts. Dozeman suggests that the Priestly strand is seeking to reinterpret and reapply Mosaic authority to the Priestly class. Be that as it may, it would seem that there is a conscious linkage of this passage with the events surrounding the Sinai theophany described in Exodus 34.

Once in the tent of meeting, Moses hears the voice speaking to him. Targum Onqelos has וְשָׁמַע יָת קָלָא דְמִתמַלַל עִימֵיה ("then he heard the voice speaking with him"), Targum Neofiti has הוא שׁמע ית קל דבירה ממלל עמיה ("then he heard the voice of the Word speaking with him") and the Greek ἤκουσεν τὴν φωνὴν κυρίου λαλοῦντος πρὸς αὐτὸν ("and he heard the voice of the LORD speaking to him"). In each of these instances (as with the Masoretic text) there is a notable absence of either God or the LORD, something later remarked upon by *Sifre Numbers.*[395]

Comparing Neofiti with the Greek and Onqelos it would appear that there are either twin traditions concerning the voice of God and the Word of God or that, in Neofiti's eyes, the two can be equated. In either case it would appear that the voice of God is

393. Flint, Peter W. From the introduction of the translation of Numbers in the NETS.
394. Dozeman, 2000, p41, n74.
395. Yadin, 2003, p604.

carrying out some sort of mediatorial role akin to that of the Word of God. Neofiti's translation is especially redolent as it ascribes a voice to the דביר (word), which suggests a level of hypostasization for the דביר (word) as well as the מימר (memra) as previously discussed.

There is a translation issue in the Hebrew surrounding the use of מרבד which is a hitpa'el participle, one of only three occurrences of this verb in this state. A consideration of the other two texts (Ezekiel 2:2 and 43:6) suggests that in this form there is a reflexive meaning which could be rendered "causing oneself to speak" or "speaking by one's own agency". This, given the context of these three verses, "might emphasize the agency of the voice and thus its independence from God".[396]

The conjunction of texts are notable in themselves as they constitute important theophanies within the Judaic tradition and would suggest that there is an understanding that the voice of God plays a mediating role within these phenomena. The evidence within the Greek scriptures for this tradition is far clearer and more extensive, and there is also evidence for it within the Targumim as can be seen in the following passages.

e) The Voice Returns to Sinai (1 Kings 19:13)

Aside from Deuteronomy, some have suggested that another early comment on the Sinai theophany may be found in 1 Kings 19 and the theophany before Elijah at Horeb, a.k.a. Sinai.[397] Others have suggested that the incident is intended as a polemic against imagery within Israelite thinking which has its roots within Canaanite rather than Yahwist religion.[398] Of course, these two items need not be mutually exclusive.

Both these interpretations identify within the passage a desire to disassociate Yahweh

396. Yadin, 2003, p606. See the discussion in pp602-616 for a consideration of the texts.
397. See, for example, Lust, 1975, p133f, Sommer, 1999, p442, especially n. 46.,Cohn, 1982 pp340-2.
398. Sommer, 1999, p442, especially n. 46.

from the theophanic elements more commonly associated with Baal, the storm god, such as the use of storms and thunders in self-revelation:

qlh.qdš [.] b[ʿl.y]tn Ba[al gi]ves forth his holy thunder,
yṯny. bʿl.ṣ[ʾat.š]pth Baal repeats the ex[pression of] his [li]ps,
qlh. q[dš ypr]r. ʾarṣ His ho[ly] thunder [shatt]ers the earth[399]

The insistence that God is not in the wind, earthquake or fire would serve to distance God from these manifestations of the theophany of Exodus 19:16-18. Furthermore, they would place an obstacle in the way of an attempt to identify Yahweh with Baal. Here, Yahweh is not using the storm or earthquake as "instruments of self-revelation".[400] Revelation is to be found in the phenomena following the fire.

Quite what this phenomena is can be debated. In the Greek of verse 12 we have: καὶ μετὰ τὸ πῦρ φωνὴ αὔρας λεπτῆς κἀκεῖ κύριος (and after the fire the sound of a light breeze, and the Lord was there). The MT has: קוֹל דְּמָמָה דַקָּה, (a sound of sheer silence).

The question is one which lies behind all passages such as this: should the translation be voice or noise? Is there a whispering voice or a quiet noise? That this voice/noise is to be identified with God is evident from the Septuagint, quoted above and, in light of verse 13, voice is to be preferred. Verse 13 reads:

MT

וַיְהִי ׀ כְּשְׁמֹעַ אֵלִיָּהוּ וַיָּלֶט פָּנָיו בְּאַדַּרְתּוֹ וַיֵּצֵא וַיַּעֲמֹד פֶּתַח הַמְּעָרָה וְהִנֵּה אֵלָיו קוֹל
וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־לְּךָ פֹה אֵלִיָּהוּ

When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

LXX

καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἤκουσεν Ηλιου καὶ ἐπεκάλυψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ μηλωτῇ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐξῆλθεν καὶ ἔστη ὑπὸ τὸ σπήλαιον καὶ ἰδοὺ πρὸς αὐτὸν φωνὴ καὶ εἶπεν τί σὺ ἐνταῦθα Ηλιου

And it happened, when Eliou heard it, that he wrapped his face in his hairy mantle and went out and stood by the cave, and behold, there came a voice to him, and it said, "Why are you here, Eliou?"

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399. Cited in Niehaus, 1994, p265. See also Day, 1979, p143ff,
400. Sommer, 1999, p442.

Targum Jonathan

וַהֲוָה כַד שְׁמַע אֵלִיָּה וְכָרֵיךְ אַפּוֹהִי בְּשׁוּשְׁפֵּיהּ וּנפַק וְקָם בִּתְרַע מְעָרְתָּא וְהָא עִמֵּיהּ קָלָא וַאֲמַר מָא לָךְ כָּא אֵלִיָּה

And when Elijah heard he wrapped his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave, and behold, with him the voice saying ‘what are you doing here Elijah’.

Of course, it could be argued that what we have here are differing layers of textual traditions, but what is being sought here is not a twenty-first century reconstruction of the text with all the methods of historicism that comes with it. Rather, “[b]y focusing on the text as an artistic composition, we can begin to understand the purposes of the final author... and the ways in which the work has functioned for countless generations of hearers”.[401] It is from those countless generations that the Gospels arise. To take a dissecting approach as, for example, Sommer does is to underestimate and ultimately ignore the skill of the redactor.

What is evident, when attention is paid to the narrative, is that the passage explicates the theophany at Sinai to Moses. The parallels are clear enough.[402] Moses is hidden within a cave/cleft during the theophany at Sinai and Elijah comes to *the* cave (the Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew all have the definite article at 1 Kings 19:9). Both are ‘passed by’ (1 Kings 19:11, cf Exodus 33:22). Both are on the same mountain. Both are within narratives where defense of the Covenant is central: Moses returns to Sinai after those who worshipped the golden calf were stricken by plague (Exodus 32:35) and Elijah has fled after the prophets of Baal were slaughtered at Wadi Kishon (1 Kings 18:40). Sinai/Horeb is a significant location within the history of the Covenant[403] and the two theophanies on the mountain serve to underline its importance.

There are important differences, however. Whereas the voice speaks from the fire in the Mosaic theophany (see above), here it is clear that the voice is distinct from any

401. Cohn, 1982, p333.
402. cf Cohn, 1982, p342.
403. Sommer, 1999, p442f.

physical manifestation. This has led Sommer to comment that this is a highly unusual incorporeal depiction of God.[404] This conclusion, however, is built upon some shaky source-critical foundations:

i) there is an assumption that all that exists of any original source can be found in what is extant within the final form of the text;

ii) a tendency to take a verse or small portion of text in isolation which can lead to arguments from silence which result from dissection of the text rather than consideration of a source as a whole (which probably cannot be reconstructed in any case);

iii) an assumption that any redactor either introduces later theology into a text with a scant regard for the oral traditions of the culture or is so clumsy as to introduce new theologies without realizing what is occurring.

This passage is a case in point. Whilst verse 12 denudes this appearance of God of any corporeality, verse 13 introduces the voice as coming to Elijah. The same voice which walked in the garden and took Abraham out to see the stars. This voice is then, in verse 15, identified with Yahweh. The incorporeality is not as certain as suggested by Sommer and there is a likelihood that the redactor was careful to blend the available sources in such a way as not to destroy their meaning.

This theophany forms the highlight of the great narrative sweep which begins at chapter seventeen and ends with the identification of Elijah's successor in verses 19-21. Cohn has suggested that the three chapters, as well as forming one narrative thrust, take the form of three parallel structures.[405] In his scheme the 'voice' of chapter 19 is paralleled by the voice of Elijah in 17:17-23 and the lack of Baal's voice in 18:21-38. Ironically, no voice is heard from Yahweh as the fire falls (for the LORD was not in the fire) but the voice is finally heard within the theophany in chapter 19.

All of this, along with the passage in Deuteronomy above, serves to give a tradition

404. Sommer, 1999, p443.
405. Cohn, 1982, p343f.

in which the voice of God is experienced on Sinai, firstly by Moses and then by Elijah. This voice is described in such a way as to allow an interpretation of hypostasization and a close identification with theophany. From this it can be concluded that it was not noise or thunders heard at Sinai, but that the tradition as received by the Deuteronomist and redactor of Kings was of a voice at Sinai.

f) The Voice and Ezekiel

Ezekiel's call and vision whilst amongst the exiles by the river Chebar is notable for its use of the voice motif. The passage is a somewhat complex one, but the activity of the voice can be traced nonetheless.

The tracing of the Ezekiel text requires some care. Tov has suggested that the Greek provides "a more original text from a contextual point of view, and the long text of the MT a secondary one ... The amplifications of MT represent an added layer of contextual exegesis, clarification and slight editing".[406] In coming to this conclusion he notes that the Greek is some five percent shorter than the MT and suggests that the overplus, when considered together, represents a later "literary layer".[407] When these differences are compared with reference to word order, lexical equivalents and so on the translation technique of the Greek would appear to be "relatively literal and consistent".

If, as Yadin suggests, there has been some level of theological editing of the MT of Ezekiel,[408] then it would be as well to allow the Greek to predominate in the discussion below. Whilst it has already been argued that the Greek scriptures represents the lens through which the Jewish scriptural tradition is mediated to the Gospel writers and their textual communities, the fact that the Greek scriptures represent an earlier Hebrew vorlage than the MT would also suggest that the reading preserved within it would form the textual milieu for second temple speculation arising from the book. Tov calls the translation of the vorlage in the Greek

406. Tov, 1986, p91f. See also Tov, 2001b, pp333ff.
407. Tov, 2001b, p334.
408. Yadin, 2003, p613.

"relatively faithful"[409] and the evidence from Qumran would suggest that there was more than one textual tradition.[410]

The first appearance of the voice of God comes in the first chapter of Ezekiel, and of particular interest here are 25f and 28ff which may be translated (LXX):

> 25f: [25]And behold, a voice from above the firmament that was over their heads. [26]Like an appearance of a lapis lazuli stone was the likeness of a throne upon it, and on the likeness of the throne was a likeness just as a form of a human above.
>
> 28f: [28]Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. [2:1]That was the appearance of the figure of the Glory of Yahweh; when I saw it, I fell on my face. Then I heard a voice speaking. [2]And it said to me: "Man, get on your feet and I shall speak to you." Spirit entered me as it spoke to me and got me on my feet, and I heard speaking with me.[411]

The context of the passage suggests that the preferred translation of φωνή in verse 25 is voice, and not noise. Whereas the preceding verses are full of description of the noise of the wings of the living creatures, Ezekiel is clear that by this stage the movement has stopped and the the wings have been let down.

The phraseology in verses 25f is significant. As has been seen, the theophany at Sinai is significant in the development of the voice narrative, and here the conjunction of voice and form can be found in Ezekiel's vision. Yet here the narrative is developed such that, unlike Sinai, it can be argued that the form is seen. Certainly, there are aspects of the vision which would place it within the tradition of the voice theophanies, not only at Sinai but also Psalm 29:3:[412]

> The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters.

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409. Tov, 2001b, p283.
410. 4QEzek[a] has "an inconsistent pattern of agreements and disagreements with [MT, Sadaqa, and OG]". Tov, 2001b, p116.
411. This translation is from Yadin, 2003, p609. The Greek reads: [25]καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ὑπεράνωθεν τοῦ στερεώματος τοῦ ὄντος ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς αὐτῶν [26]ὡς ὅρασις λίθου σαπφείρου ὁμοίωμα θρόνου ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὁμοιώματος τοῦ θρόνου ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου ἄνωθεν ... [28]ὡς ὅρασις τόξου ὅταν ᾖ ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὑετοῦ οὕτως ἡ στάσις τοῦ φέγγους κυκλόθεν αὕτη ἡ ὅρασις ὁμοιώματος δόξης κυρίου καὶ εἶδον καὶ πίπτω ἐπὶ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν λαλοῦντος [2:1]καὶ εἶπεν πρός με υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου στῆθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου καὶ λαλήσω πρὸς σέ [2]καὶ ἦλθεν ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ πνεῦμα καὶ ἀνέλαβέν με καὶ ἐξῆρέν με καὶ ἔστησέν με ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας μου καὶ ἤκουον αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος πρός με
412. Block, 1997, p104, n96.

It should be admitted that the passage is not explicit in its linking of the voice and form, but the context would suggest that such a connection is the most likely. A few verses later, this vision is described as being the "appearance of the ὁμοιώματος of the Glory of the Lord" and it would seem that the discourse in chapter two comes from this source.

Furthermore in verse 26 itself, it is worth noting that Ezekiel is giving a mainly visual - and remarkably graphic - description of his vision. Granted there is plenty of noise, but this is connected to elements of the vision, and the voice that is described is given a spatial location.[413] It is not beyond the realms of possibility that this all too visible voice is a motivation behind the obscuring editing of the MT.

Moving on to the end of verse 28, we are confronted with the phrase: καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν λαλοῦντος. This is often rendered "and I heard the voice of one speaking",[414] yet the vagueness of the speaker is at variance with the importance of the words that are said. Moreover, the commission given to Ezekiel is to pronounce "this is what the LORD says" (2:4). Yadin notes that some suggest that the indistinct speaker is a cipher to maintain the "mystery of God",[415] yet he correctly makes the observation that after chapter one any attempt now is rather late! Given the genre of the call of a prophet, one would expect the call to come from the LORD himself.

Given all of this the translation "and I heard a voice speaking" is to be preferred, especially given the subject of verse twenty-five. It is more than likely that the speaker of this passage is the same figure that Ezekiel sees.

Somewhat later in the Book of Ezekiel, in chapter nine, we read: ἀνέκραγεν εἰς τὰ ὦτά μου φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγων... ("he cried out into my ears in a loud voice, saying..." - 9:1). The context is of a vision which begins in the previous chapter in which Ezekiel meets with a figure reminiscent of the vision in chapter one. He is

413. Yadin, 2003, p613.
414. New English Translation of the Septuagint.
415. Yadin, 2003, p610.

taken to the temple where he is shown idols before being taken to the inner court where about twenty men are doing obeisance to the sun. It is then that Ezekiel's guide promises wrathful retribution and the vision continues with the quote above.

As with the opening passage, the Greek and MT show a marked divergence. In 8:18 the MT interpolates וְקָרְאָ֥ו בְאָזְנַ֖י קֹ֥ול גָּדֹ֑ול ("and though they call in my ears with a great voice"), a phrase with a near repetition in 9:1. The Greek, however, does not have any such phraseology.

The effect of this is marked. The addition of the phrase in 8:18, with its adverbial function, suggests to the reader that the קֹ֥ול גָּדֹ֑ול of 9:1 is similarly adverbial. This, in Yadin's opinion, is a theological editing akin to that which can be discerned elsewhere within the MT.[416] Without the phrase it is possible for the voice to play a mediating role, a role which would sit comfortably within the theological landscape of Ezekiel. That the MT editors felt the need to interpolate the phrase would suggest that they were aware of this danger.

The final example of this voice within Ezekiel comes at 43:6 in the context of the narrative section detailing the prophet's vision of the temple, guided by a man "whose appearance shone like bronze" (40:3):

LXX

καὶ ἔστην καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου λαλοῦντος πρός με καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ εἱστήκει ἐχόμενός μου

And I stood, and behold, a voice of one speaking to me from the house, and the man stood next to me.

MT

וָאֶשְׁמַ֣ע מְדַבֵּ֣ר אֵלַ֔י מִן־הַבָּ֖יִת וְאִ֣ישׁ הָעֹמֵ֑ד אֶצְלִֽי

And I heard speaking [middabber] to me out of the temple,though [the] man had been standing beside me.[417]

416. Yadin, 2003, p615.

417. This more literal translation is taken from Yadin, 2003, p607.

In this phase of the vision, Ezekiel is brought to the Eastern gate and the glory of the LORD enters the Temple by that gate, filling the Temple. It is then that, according to the MT, Ezekiel hears 'speaking'. The Greek has a rather fuller rendition "And I stood, and behold, a voice from within the temple, one speaking to me...". As in the case of 9:1 above, it would seem that the MT deliberately obscures the meaning in order to avoid a hypostasization of the voice. In all other instances of φωνη in the Greek, קוֹל can be found in the MT.[418]

Given the theme that has so far developed within Ezekiel of the voice of God it would be more natural to assume that it is precisely this voice which is speaking, a voice which is introduced in verse two of the MT which reads: "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east and the sound of his voice was like the sound of many waters and the earth shone with His brilliance".[419]

There is, therefore, within Ezekiel a more developed theme of the hypostasization of the voice of God which builds on the theophanies at Sinai and Horeb. A theme which it is possible to see as behind Psalm 29 (28 LXX) which is in praise of the mighty voice of God. One might also posit a similarity to the role of the voice of Ba'al in Cannanite texts.

g) Conclusion

The evidence above points to a developing theme of the Voice of God within the Jewish scriptures that was, it would seem, later edited out of the MT. This theme, present within the Greek tradition, in all probability would have been known within the Hebrew scriptures of the day, but did not survive.

The theme of the Voice runs throughout the Old Testament and can be linked to important, covenantal settings. Indeed it would seem that the Voice of God is the agency by which the LORD communicated with his covenantal people. Thus, the

418. Yadin, 2003, p608.
419. Yadin, 2003, p607.

Voice walks with Adam, is present at the covenant with Abram and is the means by which Moses receives the covenant. at Sinai. Elijah, who defends the covenant when all seem against him, meets the Voice, again at Sinai.

It is in Ezekiel that the motif takes a new twist. The vision suggests that the form of the Voice has been glimpsed, a glimpse that is human-like in appearance and it would not take much imagination to see how this would have caught the eye of early Christian exegetes.

Yadin mounts a compelling argument for such a tradition within the Hebrew texts,[420] and it would seem that the evidence points to its existence with the Greek tradition too. However, for the purposes of this thesis all that is being established is that the ambiguities and suggestions (especially in the Greek) allow the early Christian textual communities to build upon material to be found within the Jewish scriptures. These may be reinterpreted and given a new direction, but they are drawn from existing sources.

V. Summary

Within the Second Temple period there is development in the understanding of the presence of the LORD in response to the sense of inadequacy with regard to the Temple. If the LORD is not present in the same manner as portrayed within the Monarchic period, then his presence is understood to be mediated in other ways. These mediations are identified with the LORD himself in such a manner that they are portrayed in similar theophanic language and are understood as being reified.

These modes of mediated presence are of particular importance to the Johannine community and form part of the basis of their portrayal of Christ, as will be seen below. The figures of Word, Wisdom, Torah and Voice were understood as theophanic and, therefore, form an important part of this argument.

However, the incarnation is significantly different from all of these theophanic

420. Yadin, 2003.

modes in that Christ ‘takes flesh’. That does not deny the influence of this background, but is to suggest that in Christ the ‘form’ of the theophany is present in a unique manner. That this form is human - the person of Christ - does not deny any claims of divinity of theophanic manifestation. Rather, as will be seen, there was an understanding of the image of God, in which humans were created, which extends to the form too.

6
'Anthropomorphic' Theophany

Within the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* we find related the response to the claim, to be found in Isaiah 6, that the prophet had seen God:

> [6]And Belikira accused Isaiah and the prophets who (were) with him, saying, "...[8]And Isaiah himself hath said: 'I see more than Moses the prophet.' [9]But Moses said: 'No man can see God and live': and Isaiah hath said: 'I have seen God and behold I live.' [10]Know, therefore, O king, that he is a liar... [11]But Beliar dwelt in the heart of Manasseh and in the heart of the princes of Judah and Benjamin and of the eunuchs, and of the kings counselors. And the words of Belkira pleased him very much, [12]and he seized Isaiah (*Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 3:6-12).

There follows an account of these visions of Isaiah, which is commonly held to be a later interpolation,[421] after which Manasseh, enacts his punishment upon Isaiah:

> Because of these visions, therefore, Beliar was angry with Isaiah, and he dwelt in the heart of Manasseh, and he sawed Isaiah in half with a wood saw. (*Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 5:1)

Removing the interpolation, we are left with an account of Manasseh killing Isaiah because the latter claimed to have seen God (cf Isaiah 6:1), something seen as blasphemous,[422] a tradition to be found within the Babylonian Talmud too.[423]

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421. Knibb in Charlesworth, 1983, vol 2, p143. But see also Hall, 1990, Bauckham, 1998a
422. Wilken, Christman & Hollerich, 2007, p1.
423. cf *Yebam.* 49b: "[Rabbi Simeon ben 'Azzai] said: He [Manasseh] brought him to trial and then slew him. He said to him: Your teacher Moses said, 'For men shall not see Me and live' and you said, 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up'. Your teacher Moses said, 'For what [great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them], as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him', and you said, 'Seek ye the Lord when he may be found'. Your teacher Moses said, 'The number of thy days I will fulfil' but you said, 'And I will add on to your days fifteen years'. 'I know', thought Isaiah, 'that whatever I may tell him he will not accept; and should I reply at all, I would only cause him to be a wilful [homicide]'. He thereupon pronounced [the Divine] Name and

The dating of the *Martyrdom* is inevitably problematic but it is probable some of its themes at least were known to the author of Hebrews who writes of the prophets: "[t]hey were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword" (11:37). Certainly the tradition was known to Justin Martyr and Tertullian[424] and Hall suggests that the final form of the text hails from a late first/early second century prophetic school[425] and Hannah writes of an emerging consensus which places the text in the early second century, if not slightly earlier.[426] However, parts of it, including the sections quoted above, would seem to have an earlier provenance and may well date to the persecutions under Antiochus IV.[427] Bauckham's assessment is balanced: "it should probably be seen as an originally Christian apocalypse, employing some Jewish traditions about the prophet Isaiah".[428]

It can therefore be demonstrated that in a tradition which both pre-exists and post-dates the Gospels there is an insistence that God is unseen. That this is the settled view of the church is illustrated by the writings of Didymus the Blind who, some centuries later, goes to some length to show that when Isaiah said 'saw' he, in this instance, meant 'understood'.[429]

This, of course, is something which can be found within the writings of the New Testament too. Paul writes: "It is he [God] alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see" (1Timothy 6:16). This is the God who is "immortal, invisible" (1:17) and who, according to John, "No one has ever seen" (John 1:18, cf 1 John 4:12). This draws upon the tradition spoken of

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was swallowed up by a cedar. The cedar, however, was brought and sawn asunder. When the saw reached his mouth he died. [And this was his penalty] for having said, 'And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips'."

424. cf *Dial.* 120:5; *Paen.* 14.
425. Hall, 1990. He also proposes that the accusation made against Isaiah was similar to that levelled against the prophetic school from which the final form of the book arose (p 295). See Hall, 1990 for a discussion of different views as to dating.
426. Hannah, 1999a, p85.
427. Knibb in Charlesworth, 1983, p149f. See also Hall, 1994 for dating of other parts of the work.
428. Bauckham, 1998a, p69.
429. Commentary on Genesis, SC 244:156-158.

in the *Martyrdom* that "no one shall see me and live" (Exodus 33:20).

All of this serves to illustrate the question at the heart of this thesis. How can it be that Christ is said to be God when the God of the Bible is hidden and the Jesus of the Gospels is all too visceral? When Thomas meets with the risen Christ in the final chapter of the fourth Gospel he encounters the corporality of Jesus by touching the wounds in his hands and side, and yet he feels able to exclaim "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Thomas' actions would fly in the face of the Jewish and Christian traditions, illustrated in the *Martyrdom*.

I. Theophany and the Image of God

When reading the Jewish Scriptures it soon becomes clear that the types of manifestations which may attract the use of the word "theophany" are broad indeed. The Sinai theophany and Jacob's wrestling may both be seen as theophanies yet are clearly different in terms of nature and scale. Some narrowing of terms is desirable.

Within the pages of the Old Testament there is a development in the modes of theophany. Broadly speaking, two different modes can be discerned: anthropomorphic (where God appears in human form), and glory/shekinah (where the God appears in fire, cloud or glory).

What is in view for the purpose of this consideration is what is best termed anthropomorphic theophany. This falls into two main areas: firstly there are those theophanies in which a 'human' figure is identified as divine in some way; and secondly there are those theophanies wherein the manifestation carries out a physical or material action. One might also add a third important catagory of what may be termed as prophetic theophanies, where the prophets have visions where God appears in anthropomorphic terms.

To make another broad point, it is suggested that there is an increasing reticence in the descriptions of God as the Old Testament progresses. The anthropomorphic theophanies are a particular feature of the Patriarchal narratives, and cease once the

law with its sacrifical code has become the main way in which God is approached. Once the writing prophets are operative, their visions are allusive in language so, for example, Ezekiel sees "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD" (Ezekiel 1:28).

a) The "Human Theophany"

There are two instances in the Old Testament where a theophany is described as a man (אִישׁ): the three who visit Abraham in Genesis 18:1-15 and the figure who wrestles with Jacob in Genesis 32:23-33. These two passages are remarkable in as much as the level of anthropomorphism displayed within them is out of place not only in the remainder of the Old Testament, but within what remains of other Ancient Near Eastern texts.[430] Their very concreteness has led most to see in them another heavenly figure (an angel, divine messenger etc) or to attribute them to a singular strand of thought within a documentary hypothesis.

However, this is the scholarship of a recent age and is anachronistic to those reading the passages in Second Temple Judaism. That these texts were known and used by the early Christians can be seen by their place within the apologetics of Justin surveyed above, and it did not take long for them to be viewed as 'Christophanies'. The unusualness of these texts clearly drew attention, as did their place within the wider Jewish narrative whereby they recount "decisive promises to the two primary patriarchs".[431]

b) The Image and Likeness of God

Given the knowledge of the Jacob tradition in Hosea, and the use of unusual phraseology within the visit to Abraham, it would seem that these two traditions form part of an early stratum of the text.[432] Given this, it is tempting to dismiss the portrayal of anthropomorphic theophanies as a product of naivety as, indeed, von

430. cf the survey of relevant Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, Egyptian and Hittite texts in Hamori, 2008, chapter 6.
431. Hamori, 2008, p151.
432. Hamori, 2008, pp75ff.

Rad does.[433]

However, the Genesis narrative would suggest that the creation of Adam in the image of God is something which speaks to the later protrayals of God. Moreover, as will be seen below, anthropomorphic imagining of God is present within Rabbinic Judaism which suggests that the notion of an increasing reticence in portraying God as Judaism 'develops' is flawed. In fact, one might more properly speak of Adam being Theomorphic. In addition to all of this, what is being sought is not a Historico-Critical reconstruction of texts but rather possible reading strategies of those who composed the Gospels.

Different explanations have been offered for quite what is meant by the 'image' and 'likeness' of God.[434] A widespread opinion suggests that it is best understood as giving 'royal' status to humankind since the ancient Near Eastern cultures often spoke of their kings as being in the image of God.[435] Middleton critiques this general position and proposes that the creation of humans in Genesis seeks to undermine the Mesopotamian understanding that all great events are the works of kings or gods. The passage "was intended to subvert an oppressive social system and to empower

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433. "This is not to be explained as an anthropological presentation of God…but by the primeval nature of the narrative; the man and his wife have not yet been expelled from the garden where they are together with God. It is only in this way – being ashamed, fear, hiding oneself – that the disruption of the partnership can be clearly expressed". von Rad, 1984, p253

434. See also the lists of interpretations given in Towner, 2008, pp309ff, Wenham, 1987, pp29ff, Bird, 1981, p139, n24, Miller, 1972, and Westermann & Scullion, 1994, pp147ff.

    Broadly, there is an early tradition of reading the passage as dealing with certain 'higher' aspects of human existence (e.g. rationality, spirituality etc.). This can be seen in the works of Philo, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Some seek the image in the 'lower' aspects such as love which are not present in animals (e.g. Augustine). Other see the aspects of humanity in view as self-transcendence (Farley), a capacity to be moral (Bromiley), or a capacity to relate to God (e.g. Buber's I-Thou). Some have understood the passage as one of stewardship of the earth (e.g., Hehn, von Rad, Wildberger, W H Schmidt) whereby humans have a sort of regency. A few have seen a physical likeness (e.g., Gunkel, Humbert, von Rad and Zimmerli).

435. Sarna, 1989, p12. See also Curtis, 1992. Brueggemann in 1982 wrote that this view was "now generally agreed" Brueggemann, 1982, p32. For a critique of this position see Bray, 1991, p197f.

despairing exiles to stand tall again with dignity as God's representatives in the world".[436] Cotter wonders if a "spiritual resemblance" is in mind[437], but it would seem that the passage has the whole of the human nature in mind and not one aspect of it.[438]

Recently, another interaction with Mesopotamian thought has yielded another interpretation of the nature of צֶלֶם (image), a word used in Genesis 1:26 - "Let us make humankind in our image". Herring's conclusion is worth reproducing:

> It is more drastic than that: humanity is given the place primarily occupied by the statues of the gods in the ancient Near East and secondarily by kings and other temple officials (such as the āšipu-priest). Yet even in the latter forms, the concept is not radically changed: whether wood, stone, or human, after consecration the image was thought to extend or manifest the presence of the god.[439]

From this, it will be seen that there is little by way of the interpretation that the 'image' in mind is physical, a view made popular by Humbert[440] but now in quick retreat since the 1960s in response to the common portrayal of "Israel's famously aniconic religious system"[441]. This understanding, it should be noted, is under increasing challenge[442] with Niehr even suggesting that the burden of proof on those who seek to deny the use of cultic images of YHWH and suggests that such a statue was present in the First Temple[443] (although see the critique in Emerton's review of the book).[444] Archeological finds at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom have only served to strengthen this view.

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436. Middleton, 1994, p21f. See also Middleton, 2005.
437. Cotter, 2003, p18.
438. McKeown, 2008, p280, following Curtis, 1992 and Barr, 1972.
439. Herring, 2008, p494.
440. Humbert, 1940, pp 153-175. See also Clines, 1968, pp54ff.
441. Cotter, 2003, p17f.
442. The abstract of one article is illustrative of this trend: "With the abundance of evidence that the Israelites in the First Temple period did not strictly observe the Second Commandment banning images, it seems increasingly difficult to agree with the longstanding view that the Hasmoneans were aniconic. Given the fact that they were so deeply Hellenized, it might be more appropriate to refer to their selective practice of banning some sorts of art as "anti-idolic." Meyers, 2007.
443. Niehr, 1997.
444. Emerton, 1998.

That said, the most common understanding of the image today is that of function rather than identity/substance. In other words, the dominion over the earth given to human beings enables them to function as God. Hence they are in the image of God.[445]

The problem remains, however, that the words utilised in the passage are somewhat more concrete than this interpretation admits. This, coupled with the use of צֶלֶם for idols elsewhere within the Old Testament, has led Fletcher-Louis to suggest that within Second Temple Judaism the High Priest of Second Temple Judaism was seen as an idol (צֶלֶם) of the LORD. He posits that this understanding plays an important role in early understandings of Christ.[446]

Mauser is one who brings attention to the strong monotheistic and anti-idolatrous character of the opening chapter of Genesis,[447] and it is this context which makes the use of 'image' all the more remarkable. The Priestly polemical retelling of creation, relativises the cosmological deities of surrounding polytheistic cultures, and insists that far from being slaves of the god, the human is the 'idol' of God.[448]

As McKeown puts it: "...if God was to appear on earth, it would be inconceivable for him to appear as an animal but perfectly appropriate for him to appear in human form".[449]

Of course, it should be remembered that what is important for the task in hand is the scope for interpretation by the Gospel writers, and not excursions into early Hebrew thought.

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445. There is a useful survey of interpretations in Bird, 1981, p139, n24.
446. See, recently, Fletcher-Louis, 2006 and Fletcher-Louis, 2007. For a critique of Fletcher-Louis' general methodology see Hurtado, 2003, pp37ff.
447. Mauser, 2000, p91.
448. Fletcher-Louis, 1999, p123. There is a view that this text is best viewed as a liturgical one, especially given the intertextual links with Exodus 25-40. See also Kutsko, 2000 for discussion on this point, and a useful interaction with a range of literature.
449. McKeown, 2008, p27.

In the Greek scriptures, 'image' is here translated with εἰκών which has the same connotations of concreteness. However, there are other overtones which derive from its wider use within the Hellenistic culture. In a similar manner to the Mesopotamian notions identified by Herring, within Hellenistic thought the εἰκών has a share in the reality it depicts and the essence of what is depicted is present in the image.[450]

c) The Image in Ezekiel

This understanding of the human 'idol' may be seen in Ezekiel[451] who, Kutsko argues, builds on Genesis 1:26 for his polemic against idolatry.[452] The vision in the opening chapter of Ezekiel portrays a form which "is more like that of a man than of any other creature"[453] and the prophecies as a whole, as Miller later demonstrates, are of a piece with the Priestly tradition.[454] The use of this tradition within Ezekiel confirms that this theology is not something which is contained within one strand of Biblical thought.

Kutsko notes that the form in the theophany of chapter eight - which uses language similar to that of chapter one - is described in language identical to Genesis 1:26[455] with the use of 'likeness' (דְּמוּת) being significant.[456] Against objections that a 'likeness' is a less than physical description, he points to its use in the description of an altar in 2 Kings 16:10, and the figures of oxen in 2 Chronicles 4:3 as well as the synonymous use with צֶלֶם in extra-biblical usage.[457]

In terms of the later theology of idolatry in Ezekiel one can see how both the polemic against idols and bloodshed stem from the understanding that humans are made in

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450. Flender, 1986. See also Bray, 1991, p200-201.
451. The importance of this in the understanding of Ezekiel has been discussed fully in Miller, 1972.
452. Kutsko, 2000, pp63ff.
453. Miller, 1972, p292.
454. Miller, 1972, p302f.
455. Here, he corrects the MT on the basis of the LXX's ἀνδρός. Kutsko, 2000, p65f
456. In this connection it is interesting to note the development of theology within the Orthodox churches which maintains that the image of God is retained within post-lapsarian humanity but the likeness is lost.
457. Kutsko, 2000, p66.

the image of God. To do either is to desecrate this image.[458]

d) The Image and Idolatry

There is an increasingly widespread view that the fact that the human alone truly represents the form of God leads the priestly tradition and Ezekiel to prohibit the worship of idols. In other words, the only permitted 'idol' is the pre-lapsarian human.[459] This explanation permits the aniconic tradition within Judaism to sit alongside the assertion that humans are created in the 'idol' of God. Mauser puts it succinctly: "The real image of the one, true God is the living human being itself. This person is the one true form of God in the world. To be human means to be created 'theomorph'".[460]

The importance of this in terms of the entire theophanic sequence is clear: if one is to understand the 'image' of God that Adam had as being more than simply rational, that is to say the 'image' is also to some extent physical, then one would expect the theophanies to be in a 'human' form (or, more correctly, humans to be in a 'theophanic' form).

II. Anthropomorphism or Theomorphism?

As mentioned above, for much of the twentieth century, the received wisdom has been that as Judaism develops it becomes increasingly uncomfortable with anthropomorphic patterns of thought concerning God. In 1970, Mauser cited as (somewhat harsh) evidence for the prevailing view of his day Pfeiffer, who writes of the Elohistic use of an angel to manifest God:

> This conception represents the transition stage between the childish mythology of the deity walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the evening and the spiritual conception of God in the prophetic theology.[461]

This, according to Mauser, is the result of an 'embarrassment' on the part of

458. Kutsko, 2000, p71.
459. Fletcher-Louis, 2004, p72.
460. Mauser, 2000, p91.
461. Pfeiffer, R. H. (1961) *Religion in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Row), p73. Cited in Mauser, 1970, p339.

interpreters with what is seen as crude anthropomorphic imaginings of God which are at odds with later imaginings which are more influenced by Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought.[462]

This is a view which is being increasingly challenged, not least because, as will be seen, there is evidence for an anthropomorphic imaging of God within later Rabbinic writings. Whilst it is true that there is within sections of Judaism a growing unease with such imaging of God, it would seem that this is not a universal phenomenon and one which reflects the different extents of the interplay with the wider Hellenic culture, especially Platonic traditions.[463] In fact, the view is somewhat skewed by the prominence given to Philo by later Christian authors.

Philo, reflecting his Platonic sensitivity[464], equated the image of God with the soul[465] and dismissed the notion that the anthropomorphisms of the Jewish scriptures spoke of a reality of God's nature. Rather, he argued that they represented ways in which the reality of the Divine could be communicated to those who would not be able to grasp its fullness. Thus:

> For of all the laws which are couched in the form of injunction or prohibition, and such alone are properly speaking laws; there are two principal positions laid down with respect to the great cause of all things: one, that God is not as a man; the other, that God is as a man. But the first of these assertions is confirmed by the most certain truth, while the latter is introduced for the instruction of the many. In reference to which, it is said concerning them, "as a man would instruct his son." And this is said for the sake of instruction and admonition, and not because he is really such by nature.[466]

a) Origen and his opponents

That this debate continued well after the New Testament period can be seen in the works of Origen, who opens his great *De Principiis* with these words:

> I know that some will attempt to say that, even according to the declarations of our own Scriptures, God is a body, because in the writings of Moses they find it said, that "our God is a consuming fire;" and in the Gospel according to John, that "God is a

462. Mauser, 1970, pp339ff.
463. cf Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p97f, p101. See also Mauser, 1970, pp338ff.
464. Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p101.
465. Gottstein, 1994, p176.
466. *Unchangeable*, 53

> Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Fire and spirit, according to them, are to be regarded as nothing else than a body. Now, I should like to ask these persons...

Origen's interpretation of Genesis serves to explicate his position.[467] When discussing the creation of Adam in the image of God he concedes that Genesis 1:26f and 2:7 describe the same event, but he writes of them as relating two differing phases of the creation of Adam. The image of God in chapter one refers to the "inner non-material man" and the creation of the body (which is not in the image of God) is related in chapter two.[468]

However, it is clear that Origen is arguing for something that had not achieved widespread acceptance. The idea of a corporeal God opposed by Origen can be seen in, for example, Tertullian who writes:

> How can he be nothing without whom no thing was made, so that one void should have wrought solid things, and one empty full things, and one incorporal corporal things? . . . For who will deny that God is body (*Deum corpus esse*), although God is a spirit? For spirit is body, of its own kind, in its own form.[469]

Origen certainly feels the need to counter arguments such as this in his reading of Genesis 1:26 as seen above, yet to delve further back into the early Christian writings one finds the passage from Genesis 1:26 discussed in a number of early authors. Clement writes:

> Above all, as the most excellent and by far the greatest work of his intelligence, with his holy and faultless hands he formed man as a representation of his own image (ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνος χαρακτήρα). For thus spoke God: "Let us make man in our image and likeness. And God created man; male and female he created them." (1 Clement 33:4-5)

It would appear that Origen is bringing his Platonic understanding to bear upon his interpretation of Genesis and in doing so is consciously opposing a significant

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467. It should be noted that the desire here is not to enter into a discussion of Origen's beliefs *per se*, but simply to note that there remained a need to debate the issues in the third century which would suggest a differing opinions were extant.
468. Lund Jacobsen, 2008, esp. pp216ff.
469. *Prax*. 7.7-8. Cited in Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p101.

interpretaion of the text, an interpretation first explicitly found in Pseudo-Justin[470] who conflates Genesis 1:26-27 with 2:7 in a way that Origen does not:

> Does not scripture say, "Let us make man in our image and likeness?" Of what sort? Clearly it is speaking of a man of flesh. For scripture says, "And God took dust from the earth and formed (ἔπλασεν) man." It is therefore clear that the man formed (πλάσομενος) in the image of God was of flesh. How then is it not foolish to say that the flesh formed by God in his own image is despicable and worthless?[471]

Broadly contemporaneous with Origen[472] are the Jewish-Christian *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, which take the opposing view to Origen as to the nature of the creation related in the opening chapters of Genesis:

> For He has a form for the sake of [His] first and unique beauty, and all the limbs, not for use. For He does not have eyes for the purpose of seeing with them-for He sees from every side; [for] He, as far as His body is concerned, is brighter beyond compare than the visual spirit in us and more brilliant than any light-compared to Him, the light of the sun would be held as darkness. ... He has the most beautiful form for the sake of man, in order that the pure in heart shall be able to see Him, that they shall rejoice on account of whatever they have endured. For [God] has stamped man as it were with the greatest seal, with His own Form, in order that he shall rule and be lord over all things. And that all things shall serve Him. For this reason, he who having judged that He is the All and man His image-He being invisible and His image, man, visible-will honor the image, which is man.[473]

There is some debate as to the precise nature of Adam's body - was it or was it not luminous.[474] Aaron has disagreed with Gottstein's identification of a luminous body for Adam, but has concluded that "it is still impossible to sidestep the issue of God's having an actual body whence the light derives, very similar in form to the human body.[475]

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470. So Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p115.
471. *Res.* chapter 7. (PG 6:1584). The context here is a refutation of those who deny a resurrection of the body.
472. Aaron, 1997 follows Quasten's *Patrology* 1.62 in giving an early third century date. See also Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p100f, n19.
473. *Ps.-Clem. Homily* 17.7. Here I am following Aaron, 1997 and Gottstein, 1994 in using the translation used in Shlomo Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: The Implications of this Resemblance," Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 7 (1989) 64.
474. See Gottstein, 1994 and the response in Aaron, 1997.
475. Aaron, 1997, p313. See also Gottstein, 1994.

b) The Body of God in Rabbinic Thought

The popular reading of Genesis 1:26, *pace* Origen, would appear to be that the soul *and* body is that which is created in the image of God and not simply the soul or rationality. This would reflect the traditional Jewish understanding of the late Second Temple period[476] and the usage of צֶלֶם. Gottstein writes: "I suggest that the bodily meaning is the only meaning of zelem in rabbinic literature. This suggestion is borne out in all tannaitic and amoraic sources".[477] Westermann also speaks of a "basic agreement" that the whole person is in view when the image and likeness of God is mentioned in Genesis 1:26.[478]

If one is to cast a net somewhat wider to include Rabbinic literature the same thing is found. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that this literature dates from some hundred years or more after the likely composition of the latter parts of the New Testament, it does demonstrate that the notion that Judaism became increasingly reluctant to imagine that a corporeal God is unfounded. Indeed, Wolfson states that increasingly it is recognized that the corporeality of God was not something that was rejected by the Israelites.[479]

Gottstein has noted that within Rabbinic literature there is no denial of God's corporeality[480] and Aaron has gone further in stating that there is a lack of Rabbinic texts which "set out to contradict the notion that God has a physical body that appears to be like that of humans".[481] By way of example the development of this strand of thought, Neusner has written a book in which he:

> traces the appearance of the incarnation of God - God represented in human form, as a

476. Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p114.
477. Gottstein, 1994, p174.
478. Westermann, 1974, p150.
479. "According to a growing consensus in biblical scholarship, textual and archaeological evidence indicates that for the ancient Israelites the issue was not God's corporeality, but the problem of materially representing the divine in corporeal images." Wolfson, 1996, p138.
480. "My point may be appreciated better if it is borne in mind that in all of rabbinic literature there is not a single statement that categorically denies that God has body or form". Gottstein, 1994, p172.
481. Aaron, 1997, p312. This article is a reply to Gottstein, 1994.

> human being, corporeal, consubstantial in emotions and virtues, alike in action and mode of action - in the unfolding canon of one Judaism in late antiquity, specifically, the Judaism of the dual Torah. I want to show how in the unfolding of the canonical writings conceptions of God moved from essentially the philosophical and theological - premise, presence, even person - to the immediate, specific and particular, and therefore the social and historical, the concrete and corporeal.[482]

Although one might question his use of the term incarnation,[483] it is clear that there is an imagining of God in anthropomorphic terms such that the humanlike theophanies of Genesis et al are not viewed as some archaic echo of a simpler time, but rather are the categories by which God is understood. Philo, whilst an important figure, is on this issue representing a school of thought within Judaism rather than Judaism as a whole and there is widespread material which imagines a corporeal God.[484]

Thus we have within the Old Testament, parts of Rabbinic Judaism and some sections of early Christianity writings which are explicitly anthropomorphic, especially when taken at face value. As Neusner correctly notes: "Anthropomorphism forms the genus of which incarnation constitutes a species"[485]. If Pseudo-Clementine is at all illustrative then God is viewed in anthropological terms precisely because Adam is made in the image of God. Adam is thus Theomorphic.

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482. Neusner, 1988, p4.
483. See, for example, Wolfson, 1996, p138f: "The textual evidence adduced by Neusner does not amount to proof of a conception of incarnation distinguished from anthropomorphic figuration.". See also Stern, 1992, p155 who does conclude "Still, there remain enough other instances of rabbinic anthropomorphism that can be read as indicating a belief in divine corporeality that it is imperative for us to take seriously Neusner's strongest argument, his methodological claim to reading anthropomorphic statements to 'mean precisely what they say' - that is, as being 'clear evidence of a corporeal conception of God'..."
484. "It has been a traditional Jewish belief that God is anthropomorphic (or better, humans theomorphic), and with some notable exceptions, late antique Jews rejected the metaphysic which demanded he be otherwise. God is depicted anthropomorphically in the Hebrew Bible, and this continues in subsequent Jewish apocalyptic, rabbinic, and mystical literature." Griffin & Paulsen, 2002, p98.
485. Wolfson, 1996, p138.

III. Summary

> And God made humankind; according to divine image [εἰκόνα θεοῦ] he made it; male and female he made them. (Genesis 1:27, LXX)

In another context, Wolfson coins a useful definition of 'incarnation' which will serve well in this discussion:

> I am using the word "incarnation" to refer to the ontic presencing of God in a theophanic image.[486]

It has been seen that there is a tradition of anthropomorphic imaginings of God both before and after the New Testament and, moreover, a tradition that Adam is quite literally created in the image of God. This is a reading which, as has also been demonstrated, can quite readily be made of the opening texts of Genesis. It is therefore not unnatural for the Gospel writers to see within the theophany traditions they inherited starting points for an understanding of incarnation. In other words, if God were to appear would it not be natural for that appearance to be in the human form? After all, Adam is a theomorphic being and Christ is, to borrow from Paul, the second Adam.

The point of this, then, is to say that one would expect a physical resemblance between God and his image. To accuse the text of Genesis of anthropomorphism is to put the cart before the horse. The appearance of God in human form is simply because humans are created in God's form. They are God's צֶלֶם. The implications of this become more important as the text of Genesis progresses. If one accepts that the image of God in Adam is more than rational then one expects the manifestations of God to be in human form. This is no naive anthropomorphism of a previous age, but a logical outworking of the first chapters of Genesis.

The relevance of this to New Testament understandings of Christ is clear enough, and as a result the survey of theophany within the Old Testament that follows will be

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486. Wolfson, 1996, p139.

restricted to what may be termed as anthropomorphic theophanies.

7
The Gospel of Mark

> Mark's Greek is not elegant and his rhetoric not advanced, but we should not make the mistake of thinking that because of this the content of his Gospel and his arrangement of his material is not profound, powerful, and persuasive, for indeed it is[487]

Recent times have seen a rehabilitation of Mark's Gospel into the literary circles occupied by its three more glamorous siblings. Rather that being simply a source book for Luke and Matthew (or a distillation of them) it is recognized that the redactor of the material in Mark has so ordered the book as to make definite theological points. Simplicity does not necessarily imply naivety or a crude grasp of the literary method. Witherington may well be right when he envisages Mark "struggling to express the Gospel" in a language which is not his first. The struggle has produced something worthy of close attention.

Within this Gospel there are three incidences which are suggestive of theophany: the walking on the water (which Mark insists is to be read with the feeding of the five thousand), the transfiguration and the entry into Jerusalem. These three will initially be considered individually before Mark's overall use of this theme is considered.

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487. Witherington III, 2001, p19.

I. Narrative Christology in the Gospel of Mark

Before considering a number of texts from Mark, it is worth reflecting upon his mode of Christological thought. Rather than the explicit statements of other Gospels - for instance Thomas' "my Lord and my God" in John - Mark's approach is to portray a narrative which illustrates a particular character or quality. So it is that to seek to define Mark's Christology through use of titles is less than fruitful,[488] especially as these titles tend to be made to fit a particular purpose rather than being universal.[489]

One might object, fairly, that the Gospel does indeed open with the use of a title: "The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God". However, the role of the introduction is to set the Gospel in context and to allow the reader to play the role of a privileged observer, something Hooker likens to the role played by a Greek chorus.[490] The explication of the term "Son of God" is something that takes place in a narrative manner.[491]

This lack of ontological discussion poses a problem since the reader is left the task of interpreting the Christological clues in the text.[492] It is here that an intertextuality which allows for interaction with the prevailing Jewish (meta-)narratives of the day is important. One relevant example is the the Isaian New Exodus discussed below which, Watts has shown, forms an important backdrop for Mark.[493]

It should be noted that a narrative Christology does not of necessity demand a diachronic reading whereby Jesus is 'adopted' at baptism. Rather, the narrative

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488. Boring, 1999, p461. See also p458.
489. Or "*refracted* or bent into new meanings" Malbon, 1999, p143.
490. Hooker, 1997, p22.
491. There is a realisation that there are limits to the usefulness of a Christology based upon titles, which has led some to pursue a narrative approach. Examples of this approach can be found in Tannehill, 1979, Eugene Boring, 1992, A more hybrid approach which also takes account of titles can be found in Kingsbury, 1983.
492. "The tension between the narrator and Jesus is not a problem to be resolved, not a gap to be filled in, but a "narrative christological" confession to be heard in all its silence." Malbon, 1999, p143.
493. Watts, 1997.

process allows for a dialectical approach whereby a Christology develops which is more nuanced and paradoxical than allowed for in a purely discursive approach.[494]

In what follows, Mark's evocation of certain theophanic texts forms a part of his narrative portrayal of his understanding of the nature of the incarnation and, ultimately, of Christ. Mark does not portray Jesus in a "this equals that" manner, but his use of the theophany serves to illustrate who Jesus is.

II. The Feeding of the Five Thousand

As has been observed above, within Mark's narrative there is a clear linking of the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water.[495] The link is established in two ways. Firstly, the cause of the disciples' amazement at the walking on the water is their failure to understand about the loaves (οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις, v52). Secondly there is striking language used in verse 45 where Jesus immediately forces (εὐθὺς ἠνάγκασεν) his disciples into the boat. To separate the two accounts is to diminish their force and so the two will be considered together.[496]

In comparison with other events in this Gospel, the feeding of the five thousand is accorded a lengthy introduction[497] which underlines its importance. The first verses of the passage contain three instances of ἔρημος which build on each other to emphasize the desert or wilderness setting.[498] The importance of this will be considered at various points below.

There are, unsurprisingly, many interpretations of this passage which fall under a

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494. For a discussion on this see Boring, 1999.
495. Painter, 1997, p107. Nineham, 1963, p 177. Madden, 1997, p96.
496. Bammel has considered the sources (Bammel & Moule, 1985) and there are many who hold that the pre-Marcan tradition does not link these two incidents (e.g. Madden, 1997, p96). However, the point is that they *are* linked within the Gospel and thus if one is to consider the Mark's narrative they should be taken together.
497. Brooks, 1991, p107. Guelich, 1989, p336. Williamson, 1983, p125. Lane, 1974, p227.
498. Witherington III, 2001, p18 notes that Mark's repetitions have an accumulative effect.

number of heads whereby the meaning is variously seen as:

- Jesus the shepherd,
- a eucharistic foreshadow,
- the messianic banquet, and
- a re-enaction of the provision of manna in the wilderness.

This fourfold list is not intended to imply that only one reading is right. Nor is it necessarily evidence from which a source hypothesis can be built. Any author, modern or ancient, is capable of writing an account containing differing depths of interpretation (or, for that matter, Jesus is capable in acting in a manner which can give rise to different inferences). That said, what is of particular interest are those elements of this passage which will assist in understanding the walking on the water. In other words one is attentive to hints of theophany.

a) Sheep without a shepherd

Mark's use of the phrase "like sheep without a shepherd" (πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα - v. 34) is evocative. As many have written, it brings to mind the Old Testament prophets' condemnation of the failure of leadership in Israel (so, for example, 1 Kings 22:17 and Ezekiel 34:4-5 which both are in turn reminiscent of Numbers 27:17). Given this passage's positioning close to the banquet of Herod this is not inappropriate. Certainly some have sought to cast the entire passage in this light and, building on the similarities of the feeding to that carried out by Elijah in 2 Kings 4:42 in famine time, suggest "that the economic dimensions to Mark's wilderness feedings are more important than "eucharistic" symbolism".[499]

The use of the phrase in Ezekiel is essentially one of hope,[500] since God himself "will search for my sheep, and will seek them out" (v. 11). This hope is of a piece with the Isaian New Exodus, where the LORD will lead his people, and would suggest that a Eucharistic motif is not to the fore in the passage.

499. Myers & Lattea, 1996, p74.
500. Bammel & Moule, 1985, p220.

This is all the more so since the response brought about by Jesus' compassion is *not* the feeding. That is the concern of the disciples. Jesus' response to the shepherdless sheep is to teach them, which would suggest that hunger is not the need that Jesus identifies (unlike in 8:2).[501]

The shepherd imagery also calls to mind the twenty third psalm, an allusion further strengthened by:

- the location beside water,
- the green grass,
- the banquet implied by the crowd sitting in συμπόσια συμπόσια (v39) and
- the overflowing provision.

The first of these parallels is simply a matter of geography as that is where the crowd have gathered to meet Jesus as he lands. It is granted that it is stretching a point to call the Sea of Galilee 'still' given the events of the passage that follows!

The green grass (χλωρῷ χόρτῳ) of verse 39 calls to mind the χλόης in verse two of the Psalm (LXX). Details such as the colour of grass are not the normal stuff of this Gospel and require a explanation somewhat fuller than Anderson's suggestion that this was "probably only a 'pictorial touch' indicating that they sat down on a suitable piece of ground without spreading any cloth".[502] His observation that this is more than just an eye-witness memory of spring is, however, surely correct.[503]

Gundry considers the green grass to be a "suitable cushion such as is used for reclining at formal meals",[504] which is appropriate given Jesus' direction to have the people sit in συμπόσια συμπόσια (v39). The word has overtones of "a party of people eating together"[505] and its literal meaning of drinking together would evoke the cup of Psalm 23:5 as well as the table which is prepared by the shepherd. This

501. Gundry, 1993, p323.
502. Anderson, 1976, p175. The quote 'pictorial touch' is taken from Rawlinson
503. Anderson, 1976, p175.
504. Gundry, 1993, p325.
505. Danker, 2000, p959.

image is also reminiscent of the Messianic banquet, dealt with below.

The final (and most indistinct) echo from Psalm 23 is that of the overflowing provision (v5 cf. Mark 6:43).

Gundry[506] has posited a possible allusion between ἀναπαύσασθε in verse 31 and ἀναπαύσεως in the second verse of the Psalm. Whilst the verbal similarities are compelling, there are some problems which would militate against too strong a connection. Firstly, any connection here would skew the parallel so that the sheep are the disciples and not the crowd. In pushing this to its conclusion, Gundry casts doubt on the entire allusion to Psalm 23,[507] yet that is to force an interpretative paradigm onto the passage which is misleading. Better to have the shepherd feeding the "sheep without a shepherd" rather than the disciples. It would seem that too strong an adherence to the parallel invoked by ἀναπαύσασθε leads to a distortion of the other parallels. As with all allusion, it is important to note that allusion does not equal allegory and a complete match of all elements is not necessary. What *is* necessary is enough verbal clues to bring a certain passage, event or hope to mind. What is more germane in the allusion to Psalm 23 is the role that Jesus takes: that of the Shepherd (a.k.a. the LORD). As will be seen at other places in considering the feeding of the five thousand Jesus is portrayed as re-enacting roles played by the LORD.

Another common reading of this passage which derives from the 'green grass' has to do with the Messianic banquet.[508] This view is bolstered by material from Qumran which takes the groupings of Exodus 18:25 (and Numbers 31:14) as a model for their own life.[509] These groupings have their echoes in the divisions in Mark 6:39-40. The Dead Sea Scrolls also make mention of these groupings in connection with the

506. Gundry, 1993, p328.
507. Gundry, 1993, p328.
508. On this, see van Oyen, 1999, pp206-212. He also surveys opinions as to the meaning of the feeding miracles in Mark written between 1864 and 1982 (pp. 1-19).
509. cf *1QS* 2:21-22; *CD*13:1; *1QM* 4:1-5:17; *1QSa* 1:14-15, 28-20. cf Guelich, 1989, p341. See also Marcus, 2000, p408.

Messianic banquet in *1QSa* 2:11-22 and it is therefore not difficult to imagine this imagery being present in the minds of those beside Galilee. The imagery is heightened by the συμπόσια συμπόσια (v39) mentioned above. Rather than a division with solely militaristic overtones (although only men are numbered) there is a strong sense of the banquet.

The Messianic imagery has also been seen in the mention of green grass, a sign of "the eschatological change of the wilderness into the land of fertility and rest ('green grass')".[510] Imagery of the renewal of desert areas is common prophetic currency: Isaiah heralds the outpouring of the Spirit which will bring renewal such that "the desert becomes a fertile field" (Isaiah 32:15)[511] and "the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom" (Isaiah 35:1).[512]

Lane wryly comments that "the austerity of the meal, however, is more reminiscent of the manna in the wilderness than of the rich fare promised for the eschatological banquet"[513] and it would be true to say that there is only the merest hint of a banquet within the passage. This may be a theme within the feeding narrative, but it would be stretching a point to make it the guiding interpretative principle. Indeed the green grass is a closer fit to the Psalm 23 imagery discussed above.[514]

Within the first five verses of the passage, ἔρημος is used three times which underlines the significance of the setting of the feeding. The desert is, of course, an evocative setting within the Old Testament, being "the place where God met, tested, and blessed his people".[515] However, in this instance it has greater resonance for being the setting of both the provision of Manna in Exodus 16 and so is "a suitable setting for a miracle recalling the provision of manna in the wilderness",[516] especially

510. Williamson, 1983, p128.
511. see also Lane, 1974, p229.
512. Hooker, 1991, p166.
513. Lane, 1974, p232.
514. Guelich, 1989, p341
515. Brooks, 1991, p107.
516. Hooker, 1991, p165.

given the use of ἔρημος in the Greek scriptures during the period of wandering.[517]

This use of Exodus language is significant, of course, when viewed against the background of the Isaian New Exodus and it would appear that here Jesus is being portrayed in terms of the LORD who returns.[518] Within Isaiah 40-50, one finds the hope that the LORD will shepherd his people once more (40:11; Exodus 15:13; Psalms 77:21; 78:520,10), the wilderness will be transformed into a place of fecundity (43:19f; 49:9ff, Exodus 17:2-7; Numbers 20:8), and the people are fed and watered (49:9f; cf. 48:21). Moreover, it has been suggested that the Second Exodus would be preceded by a second period in the desert (cf. Hosea 2:14, Ezekiel 20:35-38, Isaiah 40:3; 48:20-2) wherein Israel once more encounters God.[519] A further evocation of the Exodus can be seen in the numbers of the division which bring to mind the division of the men at that time (Exodus 18:21, 25).[520]

b) The bread

Whilst this passage deals with both loaves and fishes, it is clear that it is the loaves that are significant, receiving the emphasis to the exclusion of the fish[521] (to equate fish with quail since the latter is "flesh from the sea"[522] is surely taking matters too far). Given the desert setting, it is natural to look for parallels with the provision of manna in the wilderness, but even within this imagery there are possible alternatives. In later Jewish writings there is a hope that manna would again fall in the time of the

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517. Nun has discussed the geography of the area and concluded that it was desert-like. In addition, he comments that the disciples were asked to go into the surrounding villages which suggests a less than desert-like landscape. Nun, 1997. If this is so, then it would suggest that Mark's use of the word is intended to carry more symbolic weight.
518. The following references are discussed in Watts, 1990, p34f. See also the discussion in Marcus, 1992, pp24ff and Mauser, 1963, pp45-61.
519. Mauser, 1963, pp45-61. Mauser also sees this understanding as an important impetus for the Qumran community to dwell in the desert, as does Snodgrass who sees their actions as reflecting their understanding of Isaiah 40:3. Snodgrass, 1980, p30. It should be noted that Snodgrass views the "way of the LORD" as an ethical one. Marcus has noted the phenomenon of figures who echo Moses or Joshua in leading their followers into wilderness settings, as can be seen in Josephus' writings (*Jewish Wars* 7.437-443, *Antiquities* 20.97-99, 167-72,188). Marcus, 2000, p421.
520. Marcus, 2000, p419. See also Collins, 2007, pp324ff.
521. c.f. Guelich, 1989, p342, 343.
522. Williamson, 1983, p128.

Messiah, thus:

> it shall come to pass at that self-same time that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years, because these are they who have come to the consummation of time. (2 Baruch 29:8)

By the third century AD the Messiah is being seen as the one who provides the manna, in the manner of a second Moses:[523]

> As the first redeemer was, so shall the latter Redeemer be... As the former redeemer caused manna to descend, as it is stated, Behold I will cause to rain bread from heaven for you [Exodus 16:4], so will the latter Redeemer cause manna to descend, as it is stated, May he be as a rich cornfield in the land [Psalm 72:16] (*Qoh. Rab.* 1, 9, 1)[524]

It should be noted that the third century sees this view being openly propounded by the Rabbis, but it is clear from the fourth Gospel that this view was held by the crowd.

What is notable is not so much the Messianic hope, as interesting as that is, but the fact that Moses is being credited with the provision of Manna when Exodus 16 and Psalm 78 both clearly attribute this to the LORD. This understanding is explicit in John 6:32. Manna is provided by the LORD and not Moses. Although it is the case that within the OT the LORD often acts through an agent, the presence of this agent should not obscure the source of the provision. To see any activity which evokes the provision of manna as having a sole referent in Moses is to unnecessarily reduce the scope of the evocation.

It is, of course, important to let John be John and Mark be Mark. To synthesize the two is to create something different from both. However, John's Gospel does show that the identification of Moses as the provider of the manna was present within first century thought. In fact, the place of Moses had become elevated within some Judaisms in the first century such that Philo can conceive of Moses entering into heaven on Sinai:

> What more shall I say? Has [Moses] not also enjoyed an even greater communion with the Father and Creator of the universe, being thought worthy of being called by the

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523. Hooker, 1983, p48. See also Hooker, 1991, p164. See also Johnson, 1960, p122. For more detail on this point see Menken, 1988, pp46ff.

524. Cited in Menken, 1988, p47.

> same appellation? For he also was called the god and king of the whole nation, and he is said to have entered into the darkness where God was; that is to say, into the invisible, and shapeless, and incorporeal world, the essence, which is the model of all existing things, where he beheld things invisible to mortal nature; for, having brought himself and his own life into the middle, as an excellently wrought picture, he established himself as a most beautiful and Godlike work, to be a model for all those who were inclined to imitate him. (*Moses* 1, 158).

Furthermore, for Philo Moses has attained such a status that he is a participator in God's nature since he is told by God "stand here by me"[525] (Deuteronomy 5:31).

One interpretation of this passage, therefore, is that Jesus is being equated with the Messiah who will feed the people with manna, as Moses did. Thus Brooks can write that "Mark saw in Jesus' feeding of the five thousand an eschatological Moses giving perfect rest to and supplying all the needs of his people".[526] However, this interpretation fails to explain the connection that is drawn with the walking on the water in this Gospel. It may well be that many would have understood Jesus as fulfilling some first century Jewish hope and it may well be that the disciples shared that understanding, but it would not seem that Mark is one of them[527] as will become clear once the incident of the walking on the water is considered below. Above all, it should be remembered that Moses did not provide manna, the LORD did. Furthermore, the events of Exodus 16 are accompanied by a theophany ("the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud", v. 10), which would indicate the presence of the LORD during the event.

As noted above, the incident has its overtones of the New Exodus. In Isaiah one reads:

> [9]And they shall feed in all their ways;
> in all the paths shall be their pasture;
> [10]they shall not hunger or thirst,
> neither shall burning heat nor sun strike them down,
> but he who has mercy on them will comfort them
> and through springs of water will lead them. (Isaiah 49:9-10, LXX)

525. *Posterity* 28. See also *Sacrifices* 8 and *Giants* 49.
526. Brooks, 1991, p108. See also Weider, 1956.
527. Painter, 1997, p106.

Here we have the LORD feeding his people when on the way, leading them by the water and having mercy on them. Again, as with the provision of manna, it is the LORD who will feed and not a second Moses.

Before turning to the walking on the water, two further interpretative possibilities should be considered: an echo of Elijah's feeding in 2 Kings 4, and a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. The second will be considered first.

c) A eucharistic foreshadowing?

For many years, especially at the beginning of the last century, this passage was held to have eucharistic overtones[528] due to its similarities in language and action to the events in the upper room. Further support for this view is then adduced from the treatment of the feeding in John's Gospel.

Recent years have seen a reconsideration. After all, the actions of Jesus in taking, breaking and blessing the bread are merely actions common to Jewish meals with Jesus taking the role of the host[529] as, for example, Paul did in Acts 27:35. Some have objected that the "miraculous provision of food for the multitudes reduces, if not eliminates, any serious comparison between Jesus' action and that of the pious Jewish house-father".[530] There are a number of things to be said against this:

a) there is no reaction from the crowd recorded in Mark's Gospel,[531] nor is there any request for secrecy by Jesus.[532] From the perspective of the crowd there does not appear to be anything out of the ordinary in Jesus' actions;
b) the multiplication does not take place prior to or during the blessing (v41),
c) there is no reason why a miraculous result should obviate normal means.

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528. Boobyer, 1952, p161. Some, e.g. Anderson & Moore, 1992, p41, continue to maintain this reading.
529. Guelich, 1989, pp 341-2. Hooker, 1991, p167. contra Nineham, 1963, p179. Lane, 1974, p230.
530. Achtemeier, 1972, 207. Here he follows Lohmeyer, 1937, who writes "Denn um von allen sprachlichen Indizien hier abzusehen, hier ist Jesus ja in der eben berührten Doppelseitigkeit dargestellt, als der jüdische Hausvater, der fromm den Seinen das Brot segnet und bricht", p240.
531. Guelich, 1989, p343. Nineham, 1963, p 177. cf Lane, 1974, p231.
532. Hooker, 1991, p168.

> The multiplication of the loaves simply results in a meal of a different degree rather than a meal of a different nature. After all, in Mark 1:40-44 Jesus tells the healed leper to "go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them". The leper had to follow the normal pattern, even though the healing was miraculous. To argue against a normal blessing because the meal *was to become* miraculous as it was distributed is specious.

Achtemeier speculates that a Eucharistic interpretation is part of a pre-Marcan catenae so that this passage amongst others "apparently served as part of the interpretive liturgy accompanying a eucharistic meal".[533] This position still puts more weight on the blessing action than it is able to bear. In any case, he is happy to admit that "Mark did not pattern his narration of the feedings after his account of the Eucharist"[534] so that Mark is reinterpreting this material (if, indeed, it is Eucharistic in it's pre-Marcan state). Even if that is the case, there remains significant differences between the two meals which undermine the parallels: there is no wine but there is fish,[535] there is no body/blood reference but there is food left over. These would make any link to the last supper "at best remote".[536]

What of the treatment in John's Gospel? Even ignoring the problems of using a later Gospel to interpret an earlier one, the eucharistic theme is not the primary one in John's Gospel coming as it does in a few verses towards the end of the passage. The main focus is Jesus' self-identification as the bread of life and his self giving of this 'bread' for "for the life of the world" (John 6:51). which evokes the cross. It is then this theme of sacrifice which is developed into the discourse on the bread and blood. In other words there is no direct linkage to the feeding of the five thousand.[537]

Eucharistic interpretations of this passage are built on a false premise: that the language and actions surrounding the breaking of bread are especially significant in

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533. Achtemeier, 1972, p208.
534. Achtemeier, 1972, p207.
535. Guelich, 1989, p342.
536. Guelich, 1989, p342.
537. Boobyer, 1952, p163f.

relation to communion. They are not. They are simply the actions of any Jew hosting a meal. That these normal actions are reported does, however, suggest that they carry a significance which could lend weight to a Eucharistic interpretation. However, it could equally be argued that what is being portrayed are the actions of the LORD as the host of a meal on the return to Zion, and therein lies their significance.

The differences are of greater import than any similarities. In fact, there are more similarities with the events of 2 Kings 4:42f. Moreover, given the narrative basis of Mark's approach, it is unlikely that a reader is expected to interpolate later events in earlier ones.[538]

d) Elisha and the loaves

The parallels to Elisha's multiplication of loaves are more extensive than those to the Eucharist, but are more perplexing.[539] Elisha takes barley loaves and tells his servant to distribute the food. The servant objects that there is not enough to feed a hundred people. The distribution is commanded nonetheless, and some was left.

One creative reading of this passage takes its inspiration from the famine situation facing Elisha and suggests a political reading whereby

> the disciples try and solve the problem of hungry masses through 'market economics': sending the people to village stores or counting their change. Jesus, on the other hand, teaches self-sufficiency through a practice of sharing available resources[540]

Attractive as this interpretation is, it asks rather too much of the text. In fact, given the strength of the Manna interpretation, it would be preferable to see both the feeding of the five thousand and the provision by Elisha as both alluding to the manna independently of each other, rather that the allusion to manna in the feeding having to be interpreted through the lens of Elijah.[541]

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538. Fowler notes that Mark 14 build on the earlier feeding accounts rather than the other way around. Fowler, 1981, pp134ff.
539. See also the discussion in Collins, 2007, pp319ff.
540. Myers & Lattea, 1996, p74.
541. Marcus comments on the parallels with Elisha and suggests that Jesus succeeds John in

e) Conclusions

Given all the foregoing, it would appear that the three strongest Old Testament echoes in this passage are the manna of Exodus 16, the Shepherd of Psalm 23 and the Isaian New Exodus. Of these, the manna provision has the strongest echoes but it should be noted that this manna provision is also taken up and reinterpreted within the New Exodus tradition.

It should be noted that the actions being alluded to in both of these echoes are carried out by the LORD. It is the LORD who is the shepherd and the LORD who provides the manna, and will once more feed his people whilst they are on the way in a New Exodus. This will be considered more fully once the walking on the water passage has been considered.

III. The walking on the water

So, to the walking on the water. As noted above in Mark's Gospel this event is strongly linked to the feeding of the five thousand and forms one interpretative unit. As with the feeding of the five thousand many differing expositions have been offered, especially in the aftermath of the enlightenment which saw a reluctance to have people walking on water without sinking.[542] Even when the focus moved away from question of how, the concentration on why has given rise to multiple answers.

The passage begins with Jesus forcing the disciples to leave so that he could dismiss the crowd. The verb suggests an unwillingness on the part of the disciples, but to suggest that this is so that Jesus may disperse the crowd "and thus avert a revolutionary groundswell"[543] is only to half answer the question of why the disciples are forced away. In any case there is no recording in Mark's Gospel of any such groundswell.

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a similar manner to Elisha succeeding Elijah (Marcus, 2000, p416). However the ministries of Jesus and John are significantly different, whereas Elisha and Elijah share a far more similar ministry.

542. Edwards, 2002, p196.
543. Edwards, 2002, p197.

More likely is the suggestion that the disciples themselves, having witnessed what went on with the loaves (and fishes), were themselves the groundswell, perceiving that they were part of a burgeoning messianic movement.[544] As has been explored above, there was a hope that the Messiah would provide manna such as Moses had come to be understood as having provided. It would not be impossible for the disciples to identify this hope with the events that they had just witnessed, and with their consequent actions, to stir up the crowd.

With the disciples dispatched, Jesus then withdraws.

a) The Mountain

Van Iersel notes that only here in Mark's Gospel does Jesus depart from his disciples,[545] and this fact coupled with Jesus' withdrawing up the mountain serves to give a pregnant pause before the events on the sea and heightens the separation from the disciples.[546] Jesus draws aside at crucial times in his ministry:[547] before the calling of the disciples; prior to the walking on the sea and at Gethsemane and there is a sense of expectancy when this happens. This alone suggests that what is to follow is of great significance.

That Jesus goes up the unnamed mountain is in itself evocative: mountains are places where "all of God's prophets communicate with God".[548] Furthermore, the mountain has overtones of theophany: God comes to Israel from the mountain[549] and at the great theophany at Sinai God moves down from the mountain to the tabernacle.[550]

Jesus remains on the mountain until the evening and Mark emphasizes that even after

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544. Brooks, 1991, p110.
545. Iersel, 1998, p231.
546. Gundry, 1993, p335.
547. Guelich, 1989, p349.
548. Anderson & Moore, 1992, p41.
549. Guelich, 1989, p349, drawing upon Deuteronomy 33:2 and Habakkuk 3:3.
550. Gundry, 1993, p342.

coming down, he is alone on the land (v. 47) whilst the disciples are still out at sea.

b) Seeing the disciples

Some highlight Jesus' seeing of the disciples as a miraculous event,[551] but Mark does not draw attention to this fact. He is keener that the reader is aware of the separation between Jesus and the disciples rather than any miraculous vision. What is notable is that this point in the narrative takes place in the evening ("ὀψίας") and yet Jesus does not approach the straining disciples until the fourth watch[552] (i.e. between three and six in the morning).[553] This would suggest that some hours passed between Jesus seeing the disciples and his going out, which would put the disciples' plight in a certain light.

c) The disciples' plight

This passage has often been retold as a rescue tale with Jesus reprising his actions of chapter four. Clearly, if this is the case then the interpretation of this passage is one of a mastery over nature akin to chapter four, yet there are significant differences between the two, not least that in this account there is no suggestion that the disciples are in any danger[554] or even afraid of the storm. Granted, they were struggling to make headway, but hard work does not necessarily imply mortal danger. In fact βασανίζω, with its overtones of torture and torment would suggest the opposite: that the disciples were simply struggling with no respite rather than in need of rescue. Some note that a crossing of the lake, even in bad conditions, would take between six and eight hours[555] and the use of βασανίζω would be consistent with the idea of a long, arduous struggle against adverse conditions. The other occurrences of the verb

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551. Hooker, 1983, p336.
552. Veerkamp sees an allusion to Exodus 14:24, with the Walking itself therefore being an ironic subversion of the Exodus ("Es geschieht hier Exodus, aber anders, als wir dachten und hofften"). This is why, in his view, Jesus is a ghost - a phantasm rather than a reality ("Deswegen muß der Messias ein Gespenst sein. Phantasma ist das, was erscheint, aber nicht sein kann - und darf"). Veerkamp, 2000, p25. This reading asks a lot of the opening reference to the watch and also, as is seen in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is *not* portrayed as a ghost, but only supposed to be so by Peter.
553. Painter, 1997, p107. Guelich, 1989, p349. Madden, 1997, p99.
554. Nineham, 1963, p181, Painter, 1997, p107, Iersel, 1998, p232.
555. Schweizer & Madvig, 1971, p142. See also Edwards, 2002, p197.

in the New Testament do not have any hint of mortal danger.[556]

The most telling objection against interpreting this account as a rescue story is simply that Jesus' intention is otherwise.[557] He desired to pass them by, not come to their rescue.[558]

d) Passing by

The phrase ἤθελεν παρελθεῖν αὐτούς ('he intended to pass them by' - v. 48) has caused confusion amongst some commentators: thus Painter writes "For some unexplained reason, he wished to pass by them".[559]

One suggestion is that what is in mind is a second Exodus, a view which arises from the actions in the desert evoking the giving of Manna. Thus Jesus' passing by "makes good sense if it is understood as a symbolic repetition of the crossing of the sea by Moses and the Israelites; there was no reason for him to stop".[560] Attractive as this view is, it raises some problems:

a) there is no danger or need for escape as in the Exodus;
b) nor is there any accompanying passover imagery;
c) any such crossing by Jesus would be in reverse - from Israel into the gentile nations;
d) Jesus walks over, not through, the water;

An echoing of the Exodus seems unlikely. Van Iersel has suggested that Jesus seeks to reestablish his leadership of the disciples by getting in front of them, which raises the question: why?[561] There is nothing to suggest that Jesus' position as leader is in peril, in fact Jesus' sharp dismissal of the disciples is a strong assertion of his leadership. The likely reason for the dismissal is that the disciples were beginning to

556. Matthew 8:6,29, 14:24; Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28; 2Pet 2:8; Rev 9:5, 11:10, 12:2, 14:10, 20:10.
557. Hooker, 1991, p169.
558. Anderson, 1976, p177.
559. Painter, 1997, p107.
560. Hooker, 1991, p170.
561. Iersel, 1998, p232.

equate Jesus with the longed for Messiah and may have stirred up the crowd rather than any incipient unrest with Jesus' leadership.[562]

Another suggestion is missiological in nature: Jesus wants to pass by the disciples in order to go from the Jewish side of the lake to the more Gentile Bethsaida and thereby set the pattern for future Gentile mission. The disciple's fear showed them to be unready for this.[563] However, there is nothing in the context to suggest that this is an issue which Mark seeks to address.

Snoy, after reviewing alternative interpretations,[564] sees something of the Markan Messianic Secret at work with Jesus wishing to "pass by" so that the disciples do not see his real identity.[565] However, usage of the term within the Old Testament demonstrates a coming near to reveal rather than a going away to conceal.[566] Pesch has Jesus passing by since the disciples demonstrate by their fear their unpreparedness to see this 'epiphany',[567] but this does not do justice to the chronology of the passage.

A further suggestion is that the event is a post-resurrection appearance which has been mutated in the telling and then retrojected. This asks rather a lot of an oral tradition which otherwise seems to hold up well. Furthermore, Mark connects this account strongly to the feeding of the five thousand which would militate against it being an unconnected and mutated account.[568] It it more probable that what is being

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562. A more prosaic leadership motive would be for Jesus to arrive at his destination before the disciples and thereby be ready to lead them from there, yet Jesus was at the shore after coming down the mountain for many hours (from evening to fourth watch) and would have adequate time to go around the lake, especially as the disciples were relatively static on the water. The walking on the sea is more than a device to impress the disciples or a short cut across the lake.
563. Rau, 1985, pp2122-2124. "Die Seegeschichte von 6,45-52 offenbart sich damit als wichtiger Vorverweis auf die nachösterliche Mission der Zwölf. auf diese mission werden die Junger im folgenden weiter vorbereitet."
564. He rejects a background of Old Testament theophany.
565. Snoy, 1974, pp357ff.
566. See Heil, 1981, pp69ff.
567. Pesch, 1976, 1.358
568. Brooks, 1991, p110.

portrayed by Mark, given his narrative approach, is an incident which points to the 'divine power' which Jesus had during his ministry.[569]

Perhaps, then, what is recorded is the disciples' impression of Jesus' intention at the time of the event (rather, that is, than at the time of the compilation of the Gospel). In fact Jesus was going to them, but they thought the ghostly figure was going to pass by.[570] This does not fit neatly into the narrative which displays the narrator's omniscience rather than tells the account from the disciples' point of view (Jesus' actions when he is apart from the disciples are described).

A further possibility is that the καὶ at the head of the clause is explicative rather than coordinating, which would result in Jesus' intention being to "pass their way"[571] rather than pass by them. This is a grammatical possibility but would result in a rescue story which, given the above, is not the most plausible reading.

The passage makes best sense when the verb παρελθεῖν is traced through the Greek Scriptures: it holds the interpretive key.[572] Recent commentators (with some notable exceptions[573]) see here echoes of Old Testament theophanic material, especially the theophanies before Moses and Elijah.[574]

In Exodus 33:17-34:6 we read:

> [17]Then the Lord said to Moyses, "Even this word that you have spoken, I will do for you. For you have found favor before me, and I know you above all others." [18]And he says, "Show me your own glory!" [19]And he said, "*I will pass by* (παρελεύσομαι) before you in my glory ... [21]And the Lord said, "Look, a place is near me. You shall stand on the rock. [22]Now, whenever my glory *passes by* (παρέλθω), then I will put you in a hole of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I *pass by*

569. Schweizer & Madvig, 1971, 141.
570. Cranfield, 1977, p226.
571. Lane, 1974, p236.
572. Guelich, 1989, p350.
573. For instance, more recently Hooker, 1991 and Painter, 1997.
574. Jeremias suggests that the linguistic wordplay is that God passes by, and does not destroy, rather than passing through as was the case for the firstborn at Passover (Exodus 12:12,30), the warning in Amos 5:17 (in all the vineyards there shall be wailing,for I will pass through the midst of you, says the LORD.), and the torch passing through the pieces in Genesis 15:17. Jeremias, 1977, pp197ff.

(παρέλθω). [23]And I will take my hand away, and then you shall see my hind parts, but my face will not appear to you. ... [34:6]And *the Lord passed by* (παρῆλθεν) before his face, and he called, "The Lord, the Lord God is compassionate and merciful, patient and very merciful and truthful"

The passage is significant for two reasons:

a) first, the use of will pass by (παρελεύσομαι) in verses 33:19 and 34:6 echoes Jesus' desire, and

b) secondly, "and I will call by my name 'Lord' before you." (καὶ καλέσω ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου κύριος ἐναντίον σου - 33:19 cf 34:6) has its echoes in Jesus' use of 'ἐγώ εἰμι' in Mark 6:50 (of which, more later).

There is similar language used in I Kings 19:11f:

And he said, "You shall go out tomorrow and shall stand before the Lord on the mountain; behold, *the Lord will pass by* (παρελεύσεται)." And there was a great, strong wind splitting mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord, and the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind a seismic upheaval; the Lord was not in the seismic upheaval, and after the seismic upheaval a fire; the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire the sound of a light breeze, and the Lord was there.

Again, the LORD passes by the prophet, with the phrase being descriptive of the theophanic event.

A further evocative passage is Job 9:8-11:

[8]who alone stretched out the sky
and walks on the sea as on dry ground,
[9]who makes Pleiades and Venus
and Arcturus and the chambers of the south,
[10]who does great and inscrutable things,
things both glorious and extraordinary, without number.
[11]If he passed over me, I would certainly not see him,
and if *he went by* (παρέλθῃ) me, I would not even know.

Much is made of verse 8[575] ('who...walks on the sea as on firm ground') but equally suggestive is verse 11[576] ('if he passed by me, I did not know it') which mirrors the disciples' response as well as makes use of παρέλθῃ.

575. e.g. Brooks, 1991, p111.

576. Gundry, 1993, p336.

The verb can also be found within the following theophanic contexts:

> Gen 18:3, 5
> [3]Lord, if perchance I have found favor before you, do not *pass by* your servant (μὴ παρέλθῃς) ... [5]And I shall take bread, and you will eat, and after that you *will pass by* on your way (παρελεύσεσθε) —inasmuch as you have turned aside to your servant." And they said, "So do, as you have said.

> Exod 12:23
> And the Lord will pass by (παρελεύσεται) to strike the Egyptians, and he will see the blood upon the lintel and on both doorposts, and *the Lord will pass by* (παρελεύσεται) the door, and he will not allow the destroyer to enter into your houses to strike.

The best understanding of the "passing by", therefore, is not that Jesus was to walk on beyond the disciples, or even that he went to them to rescue them but rather that Jesus was to manifest his glory in the manner of the theophanies to Moses and Elijah.[577] To "pass by" is a term closely associated with theophany within the Old Testament.[578]

The walking on the water by a divine figure is present within the Isaian New Exodus too (43:16):

> Thus says the Lord,
>
> who provides a way in the sea,
>
> a path in the mighty water

This passage, in conjunction with the Isaian passages which speak of those on the

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577. Guelich ruminates that "it may not be mere coincedence that both Moses and Elijah who experienced an epiphany of God 'passing by', also miraculously crossed a water barrier", but that may be to press the point too far. Guelich, 1989, pp350-351.

578. Marcus comments that it is "almost a technical term for divine epiphany in the Septuagint". Marcus, 2000, p426. Here he follows Heil who makes a similar point: "In fact, the use of the term "to pass by" in the following OT texts indicates that it is practically a "technical term" for the appearance of a divine being, in the sense of his drawing near and showing himself before human eyes". Heil, 1981, p70. It should also be noted that in the wider culture, the phenomenon of a divine figure travelling on the water is well known, see Collins, 2007, pp328ff. She cites the examples of Poseidon (Homer *Iliad* 13.23-31), Neptune (Virgil *Aeneid* 5.799-802, 5.826-32), Euphemus of Taenarum (Appolonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.182-84), Orion (Apollodorus *Library* 1.4.3, Hesiod *Astronomy* 4), Heracles (Seneca *Hercules Furens* 319-324). She also notes that this power later comes to be associated with kings.

way being fed whilst they are in the wilderness, would suggest that what is in view here is the actions of the LORD during the New Exodus. Mark is portraying Christ as fulfilling the hopes for the returning LORD, and in so doing is using theophanic language. This is entirely proper since the first Exodus is accompanied by theophany.

Any interpretations of this passage other than an epiphany/theophany founder on the use of the verb 'to pass by'[579] and become belaboured in their attempts to explain this wording. Indeed a 'rescue' reading of the passage leaves one with a rather "calloused" Christ.[580]

e) Jesus' words

Further support for a theophanic reading of the passage can be gained from Jesus' words to the disciples. First he enjoins them not to be afraid, a phrase used when God appeared in a vision or theophany to Abram (Genesis 15:1, 26:24) as well as in the mouth of the prophets when addressing individuals or the nation.[581] The phrase can also be found in the accounts of the Sinai theophany (Exodus 20:18-20).[582]

More telling is the greeting "ἐγώ εἰμι" with it's allusion to Exodus 3:14 et al and is "almost a revelation formula".[583] Of course the phrase can be translated with the more prosaic "it is I", and it is clear from their lack of understanding, that that was the way in which the disciples received it.[584] Yet here, at last, the question of the last boat trip in Mark 4:41 ("who is this") is answered.[585] The passing by and the approach from the mountain serve to heighten the effect of the ἐγώ εἰμι.[586] Moreover, the phrase is used within Isaiah as a self-identification by God and this use with its overtones of the New Exodus forms an important interpretative

579. Williamson, 1983, p131, Brooks, 1991, p111.
580. Guelich, 1989, p350.
581. Williamson, 1983, p130.
582. Collins, 2007, pp334ff.
583. Anderson, 1976, p179.
584. Guelich, 1989, p352.
585. Myers & Lattea, 1996, p75.
586. Guelich, 1989, p351. Marcus, 2000, p427.

framework.[587]

Gundry suggests that it is in this phrase that Jesus' desire (ἤθελεν) is fulfilled so that he passes by the disciples with an echo of Exodus 34:6 "Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious...".[588] The intent to pass by is not, therefore, frustrated by the crying out of the disciples but is completed in Jesus' answer to them.

f) Against a theophany

There are those who would argue against reading this passage in terms of a theophany.

For instance, Moses is only allowed to see God's back (Exodus 33:23) and all that Elijah experiences is the still small voice of 1 Kings 19:12-14.[589] Surely the appearance of Jesus is too complete? In response to this a few points need to be made:

a) the disciples did not recognise Jesus or the theophany, but rather thought they had seen a ghost;
b) there is no glory accompanying the event;
c) the 'passing by' may not have occured, which would suggest a partial revelation at best;
d) in any case, the revelation is not complete, but is made through the Son.[590]

With regard to the words "he meant to pass them by" Bassler[591] argues that "as it stands in the narrative, this phrase presents a complete non sequitur, and it is a tribute

587. Henderson, 2006, p230. She writes: "Even more significant for the purpose of this passage are its thematic and verbal ties with exilic Isaiah's prophetic hopes for a New Exodus". See also Collins, 2007, pp335ff. See also the discussion in Bauckham, 1998b, pp55ff.
588. Gundry, 1993, p337.
589. Sabbe, 1988, p260-61, discussed in Gundry, 1993, p340.
590. Gundry, 1993, p340. Gundry also draws a parallel with the manifestation of God through the archangel Michael in Dan 12:1 LXX.
591. Bassler, 1986, p170.

to scholarly ingenuity that some sense has been made of it".[592] The reader would not be "privy to these scholarly comments"[593] but rather Mark's deliberate obfuscation keeps the reader interested until the end of the Gospel when the puzzle is solved.[594] Yet it is hard to see what later event would serve to explain the passing by and in any case a supernatural event such as this would suggest some divine activity, even to a reader not conversant with the Old Testament precursors.[595]

A more telling doctrinal point is raised by Hooker:

> Other miracles depict Jesus as possessing a more than human power which enables him to heal the sick, and perform other extraordinary feats; this one - although it, too, demonstrates his superhuman gifts - is in danger of presenting him in docetic terms, that is as less than fully human, because more than merely human.[596]

To this it is only possible to answer that Mark seems content with that danger and it would seem unwise to impose later doctrinal concerns onto Mark. The Gospel must be allowed to speak as a primitive Christian document.

g) Denouement

Unlike other stories of this type, this passage does not end with the sudden disappearance of Christ or understanding on the part of the disciples,[597] rather Jesus gets into the boat and the storm is stilled. This does not necessarily mean that Jesus did not fulfill his desire, in fact Mark's usage of ἤθελεν elsewhere would imply that Jesus' desire *was* fulfilled (probably in the speaking of the divine name) before he stepped into the boat.[598]

That the wind ceases does not require the passage to be a rescue story, but rather it is not to be wondered at that when "I am" steps into the boat the storm is stilled.[599]

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592. Here she cites Sabbe, 1988.
593. Bassler, 1986, p170.
594. Bassler, 1986, p168-9.
595. Gundry, 1993, p341.
596. Hooker, 1991, pp168-169.
597. Guelich, 1989, p351.
598. Gundry, 1993, p341. Gundry here lists the relevant verses.
599. Anderson & Moore, 1992, p41.

Jesus has said nothing to still the storm,[600] but his self-disclosure demands his mastery over the chaos of the sea.

Yet, for all of this, the disciples failed to grasp the import of what they had witnessed (v. 51-52). This is not because such an event was obscure or difficult to interpret, but simply because their hearts were hardened (and, it would appear, were still hardened in 8:17). The passive here suggests divine action and echoes the criticism of Jesus' opponents in 3:15.[601] It is not entirely clear why their hearts were so hardened, but there may be parallels to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart so that "God's overall purpose for the people of God could be worked out".[602]

h) The Bread and the Water

What had the disciples failed to understand about the loaves? The answer to this question requires a unifying theme between this passage and the feeding. If this is the case, then what was misunderstood cannot be the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. As has been seen there was a strong hope for a Messiah to come who would provide manna and it would seem a sound proposal that the disciples were summarily dismissed because they *had* understood Jesus to be the Messiah.

Yet Messiahs do not walk on water, nor do they describe themselves in terms so reminiscent of the divine name. Nor, it should be repeated, did Moses feed the Israelites with manna. That was the work of the LORD, who appeared in a cloud at the time.

It would seem that the only satisfactory way in which to interpret both passages together is by means of theophany. It is what links the original manna giving where the LORD was present in the cloud, with the walking on the sea which is a divine activity, the passing by of the disciples, the command not to be afraid and the self-identification as "I am".

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600. Gundry, 1993, p342
601. Guelich, 1989, p352.
602. Anderson & Moore, 1992, p42, although note the verbal differences.

i) The Walking on the Water and the Theophany Type Scene

This categorisation as theophany is strengthened when one considers the passage in light of the Type Scene discussed earlier.

1) Separation to a place of significance

Such scenes begin with the separation of the protagonist(s), and in this instance there is a strong separation: Jesus forced (ἠνάγκασεν) the disciples into the boat and they are later found at an isolated spot in the midst of Galilee.

It is usual for the theophany to take place within a place of significance, and here the location is water which has resonances of the primeval chaos and the acts of God. It is over the waters that the Spirit broods in creation, and it is there that the great beasts live (Psalm 74:13-14) which are crushed by God. This imagery is present also in Isaiah 27:1 ("On that day the LORD with his cruel and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea").

It is God's mastery over the waters which forms part of the answer to Job in 38:11 and, significantly, we find, earlier in Job, the reference to God walking on the waters quoted above. The sea is viewed as a place of chaos and threat, a place to be tamed by the LORD who is its master[603].

Thus we have separation to a significant place, as would be expected for a theophany, the next phase would be the appearance of the LORD followed by speech.

2) The Appearance of the LORD

As is common in the portrayal of theophany there is a gradual disclosure: "he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea". The disciples do not

603. Malbon, 1984, p376, Henderson, 2006, pp217ff. Earlier, Malbon writes of the land being "the realm of promise" as opposed to the sea which threatens destruction and is a temporary plave for humans. Malbon, 1984, p375. Marcus discerns with the Old Testament a link between the stormy sea and death (he cites 2 Samuel 22:5; Song of Songs 8:6-7; Psalm 69:2-3 and Jonah 2 as examples). Marcus, 2000, p430.

immediately recognise the figure approaching them and mistake him for a ghost. Jesus does not speak to them at this point.

3) Human Response to the Presence of the Divine

The lack of recognition by the disciples occasions their fear. On seeing the figure approaching them they "cried out" because they were "terrified".

4) The Speech of the LORD

It is after this that Jesus speaks and, after urging them to take heart, uses a conflation of theophanic texts:

4.1. ἐγώ εἰμι (it is I)

As is well chronicled in Johannine studies, ἐγώ εἰμι can be found within the Greek text of the Exodus 3: "καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσῆν Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν·" ("And God said to Moyses, 'I am The One Who Is.'"). In terms of the revelation of God, the events at the burning bush are of great significance and Jesus' words can be heard as giving an identification with the divine. It must be admitted that the phrase by itself can be simply a means of self-identification, but within the narrative context the phrase garners overtones. This is all the more so since the reader is reading with the benefit of the identity given to Christ in the introductory verse to the Gospel.

4.2. μὴ φοβεῖσθε (do not be afraid)

This is an oft repeated phrase within the theophany speeches, and occurs as a phrase by itself or as part of a sentence. Whilst there is a certain relevance when the phrase forms part of a larger sentence, it is often the case that the hearer is being urged not to be afraid of a certain person or situation rather than of the theophanic experience itself.

Of this latter use, there are three incidences. Firstly, the covenant speech in Genesis 15 is introduced by these words (LXX):

> Do not be afraid (μὴ φοβοῦ), Abram; I am shielding you; your reward shall be very great. (15:1)

Later, in Genesis 21:17, the angel of God addresses Hagar (LXX):

> What is it, Hagar? Do not be afraid (μὴ φοβοῦ), for God has given ear to the voice of your child from the place where he is.

In Genesis 26:24, the LORD appears to Isaac and says (LXX):

> I am the God of your father Abraam; do not be afraid (μὴ φοβοῦ), for I am with you and have blessed you and will make your offspring numerous for your father Abram's sake.

5) Externalization

There is an abrupt return to the 'human' realm as Jesus steps into the boat with them. The calming of the storm operates as an externalization of the event as the sea remains in a changed state.

j) Conclusion

One can see that the Walking on the Water conforms to the Type Scene and this, with the linguistic and narrative elements identified above, would suggest that in this passage Mark is portraying Jesus in light of the theophany tradition. This approach would reflect the narrative nature of Mark's Christology, as discussed above.

Many commentators has seen in both the feeding and walking on the water references to the Exodus, and have thus seen Mark comparing Jesus to Moses. Indeed both the Passover Haggadah (*Dayyenu* section) and later texts link the giving of manna and the crossing of the Red Sea which would suggest that this comparison is apposite.[604] That said, this presence of Exodus imagery is best understood against the New Exodus such that Jesus is not a type of Moses, but is in fact playing the role of the LORD.

IV. The Transfiguration

The events around lake Galilee have attracted multiple interpretations and the Transfiguration is equally if not more contentious. As has been noted above, the

604. Noted by Brown, 1971, 1.255.

intention here is to engage with the text in its final form. In other words the theology under investigation is that of the final redactor.[605]

There are some who view this as a vision.[606] Gundry comments that this reflects philosophical assumptions as to what is and what is not feasible[607] but there are form critical considerations too.[608] The mode of appearance does not really matter as much as the allusions being presented and their context, but it should be said that whilst there may be an argument for Elijah and Moses to be visions, there is no real reason for seeing the passage in that way. Strictly speaking, though, the matter is irrelevant to our purposes.

a) Context

The problem with contexts is that they have a tendency to widen. As will be seen, the geographical context is irrelevant when compared to the symbolic context: speculations as to the location of the mount are best left as speculations and nothing more. The literary context is important, however, especially in light of the growing consensus that Mark is a writer and not simply a compiler.[609]

The transfiguration occurs after Peter's identification of Jesus as the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi. That confession is then followed by Jesus speaking of his coming suffering, resulting in a rebuke from Peter and then, in turn, from Jesus. A call to discipleship follows with a prediction of the coming of the Son of Man in glory,

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605. There is a persistent strand of argument which can be broadly categorized as Bultmannian which sees the Transfiguration as a post-resurrection appearance retrojected into the account. If this is so then the redactor is not drawing on Old Testament imagery but on a later event, which would undermine any attempt to argue the case for links to theophany. In addition any such repositioning would do violence to the text's "integrity" (Moss, 2004, p71.) and would as a consequence skew any Old Testament allusions that are present. However, even if such a repositioning is the case (and the case still remains to be made) it is equally probable that Mark is dealing with a repositioning which has taken place before he handles the tradition. Ultimately, this line of thinking is somewhat tenuous. For a survey of the issues which concludes that there is nothing of historical use in the account see Miller, 1994.
606. e.g. Hooker, 1991, p213, Wright, 2003, p597.
607. Gundry, 1993, p473.
608. Wright, 2003, p597.
609. Moss makes this point rather succinctly: Moss, 2004, pp74-75.

finishing with Jesus stating "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power" (9:1).

This is the context often afforded to the transfiguration (by those who do not assume it to be misplaced) but a slight widening of the context, to include the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, is more suggestive.

It seems unlikely that the two-stage healing of the blind man in Bethsaida is the result of the difficulty of Jesus' task[610] as Jesus achieved tasks which one would assume were more difficult in a single move (such as the raising of Lazarus, Jairus' daughter and so on). What is more likely is that this healing takes the form of an enacted parable on the "process of revelation"[611] which then introduces a cluster of passages concerning the nature of Christ. The disciples then progress through levels of understanding before being able to see clearly.[612]

In opposing readings of this type, Gundry makes the following points:[613]

a) the exorcism in 5:1-20 required a "second effort";
b) the linguistic parallels between this passage and the preceding and subsequent pericope are not as clear as suggested;
c) Peter's 'revelation' in 8:27-9:1 reflects a long held view;
d) there is no event between 8:13-21 and 8:27-9:1 which would constitute a 'healing';
e) whereas the second phase of the healing follows immediately from the first, the disciples do not grasp the necessity of Jesus' suffering and resurrection until 14:27-31 and even then the understanding is not complete enough to forestall their abandonment of Jesus at the cross.

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610. Contra, e.g., Witherington III, 2001, p239 and Gundry, 1993, p418.
611. Edwards, 2002, p244. See also Marcus, 2009, pp597ff.
612. One might find similar ideas in Philo (*Abraham* 70-71 and *Sobriety* 3). See also the discussion in Marcus, 2009, pp599ff.
613. Gundry, 1993, p421.

In response to this it should be noted that within the Gospels exorcisms and healings are miracles of differing natures and it is still safe to view the healing as a unique event. As to the problems regarding the disciples' understanding of events, the narrative nature of the Christology within this Gospel places an emphasis on the role of the reader. It is true that Peter misunderstands throughout (and there is a recurrance of misunderstanding within the Gospel) but the reader is presented with a Christ who is first partially (mis-)identified by Peter at Caesarea Philippi and then fully revealed upon the mountain in the Transfiguration

The interpretation would make better sense since the two parts of the revelation are not, as is commonly supposed, 8:13-21 and 8:27-9:1, but rather the confession at Caesarea Philippi and the transfiguration, which follow on from the healing and which are tightly linked by the chronological notice. In this reading, the confession of Jesus as the Messiah would reflect a partial revelation (and so Peter immediately shows his misunderstanding) and the transfiguration reflects a full revelation of Jesus' nature.[614] Hence, as will be seen, the two passages are tightly linked.

To be sure, the three on the mountain do not appear to fully grasp what they have seen, but that does not undermine this reading as what is at stake is not the disciples' understanding of the events, but the events themselves. After all the blind man does correctly identify the men walking in both instances, even if they appear as trees at first. It is not as if he could not make anything out due to blurred vision. After Jesus reapplies his hand, the man then has a fuller vision of reality: he can see things in correct alignment. In the first instance he has a partial revelation, in the second a full revelation. At Caesaria Philippi Peter gives a partial revelation of Jesus, at the high mountain he witnesses a full revelation. That he misunderstands is not the point.

The second, smaller, context for the transfiguration is thus the events surrounding Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ. Whilst it is true that this confession is one

614. Contra Lightfoot who that Peter's confession represents the full vision (Lightfoot, 1935, pp90ff), and Marcus who sees the resurrection as the point of full vision (Marcus, 2009, p601).

of faith which is in turn linked to the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, it needn't follow that the transfiguration has to do with suffering and resurrection.[615] It is equally, if not more, plausible that the transfiguration continues to reveal something of the nature of Jesus, a revelation which begins at Caesarea Philippi.

This is a passage which stands at the centre of the Gospel and marks the beginning of the long progression to Jerusalem. Peter's confession, it turns out, is inadequate, as is evidenced by his subsequent misunderstanding of the nature of Jesus' messiahship. Jesus openly rebukes: "For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (Mark 8:33) and this mistake is repeated at the Transfiguration.

b) Six days

The account of the transfiguration is introduced by a rare temporal notice. Elsewhere in the Gospel it is only in the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection that Mark shows such care and this serves to add import to the following scene.[616] The 'six days' also serves to link this passage with the previous one[617] and in particular the promise that some would see "that the kingdom of God has come with power".

Boobyer takes this passage as explicating 8:38 - "Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" - and interprets the transfiguration as a foretaste of the parousia.[618] Yet this reveals a rather unnecessary assumption that the transfiguration is a foretaste of a future event rather than a revelation of a present reality. Hooker acknowledges that "[a]lthough the story causes problems for the modern reader, it is unlikely that Mark was aware of them"[619] and one's interpretation of any passage such as this depends on the cultural lens through which it is viewed. Hooker again: "[t]he true nature of Jesus is a hidden

615. Contra Del Agua, 1993, p344-45.
616. Brooks, 1991, p141, Hooker, 1991, p214, Anderson, 1976, p223, Lane, 1974, p317, Wenham & Moses, 1994, p149.
617. Gundry, 1993, p457, Caird, 1956, p291.
618. Boobyer, 1940. In this he is followed by Hooker (Hooker, 1991, p215) and Witherington III (Witherington III, 2001, p261.).
619. Hooker, 1991, p214.

mystery which breaks out from time to time, and for Mark these revelations do not require explanations".[620] Indeed if, as it being argued, the transfiguration is being portrayed as a theophany of the LORD on the way to Zion, then it would not be inappropriate to see this event as standing behind the words of 9:1: "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

McCurley suggests that 'six days' is a semitic device used to heighten tension,[621] a thesis which would seem to be correct even if one doesn't wish to follow all of McCurley's conclusions. It should be noted that this does not in turn invalidate any attempt to look for mentions of 'six days' in the Old Testament since the literary device could be instigated either by Mark or by the author to which he alludes. In fact, as will be seen, the 'six days' motif is an important one within the salvation history of the Hebrews.

It has been suggested that the six days could refer to the period between the Day of Atonement and the Tabernacles,[622] especially given Peter's desire to build booths. Whilst this may shed some light upon Peter's response, it is unlikely since there is no parallel to Yom Kippur in the passage. In addition, there is a five day gap between the two feasts and any argument for an inclusive numbering system founders on the fact that Mark places the transfiguration *after* six days (μετὰ ἡμέρας ἓξ) which would allow interpretations of seven or possibly six days, but not five.

A survey of the Old Testament shows many references to six days: in connection with the creation account, the sabbath, collection of manna, the taking of Jericho, and the "seminal events"[623] on Sinai in Exodus 24. Of these the latter is the most likely target[624], especially when one takes into account the other resemblances which will

620. Hooker, 1991, p214. Cf also Anderson, 1976, p223.
621. McCurley Jr., 1974.
622. Witherington III, 2001, p262. This view is also discussed in Refoule, 1993, but he sees difficulties with the idea that Peter is thereby to be seen as the New High Priest .
623. Edwards, 2002, p262.
624. Anderson, 1976, p223, Hooker, 1991, p214, Iersel, 1998, p294, Edwards, 2002, p262, Caird, 1956, p291, Marcus, 2009, p631.

be discussed below (viz. the mountain, cloud, voice and a transformed appearance[625]), although there are also some significant differences too.[626] However, these differences are not significant enough to render the allusion void,[627] especially given the high importance afforded to the events at Sinai within Jewish thought.[628] The six days here, then, are best understood as echoing the period of preparation prior to the revelation on the mountain.[629]

c) Three Companions

It is tempting to view the three companions who accompany Jesus as evoking Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu[630] who are mentioned in Exodus 24 alongside Moses and the seventy elders but it was Joshua alone who ascended the mountain with Moses[631]. It has been suggested that the presence of three people would satisfy both the requirement for two or three witnesses and the prediction of verse one without running the risk of the news of the events spreading too widely[632].

Whatever the case may be, it is true to say that these three comprise the inner core of the disciples and often witness events apart from the other disciples[633]. Wenham and Moses suggest that "it seems quite likely that this mysterious event was seen as giving particular status to the three disciples who witnessed it, as well as being of enormous christological importance"[634] which cemented their positions of leadership within the early church. It is true that silence is enjoined upon them, even to the exclusion of the other nine, and their prominence is acknowledged[635].

The only case of three persons witnessing a theophany comes in Daniel where

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625. Cf, e.g., Evans, 2001, p34.
626. McCurley Jr., 1974, p76f, Gundry, 1993, p475f
627. Hooker, 1991, p214. Lee, 2004, p13.
628. Evans, 2001, p35.
629. Lane, 1974, p317.
630. Ziesler, 1970, p265 admits that to see parallels is 'tenuous'.
631. Moss, 2004, p79, Gundry, 1993, p376.
632. Gundry, 1993, p462-3.
633. Wenham & Moses, 1994, p146. Lee, 2004, p14.
634. Wenham & Moses, 1994, p147
635. Wenham and Moses continue to make some highly interesting suggestions in the remainder of the paper.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are joined by one who looks like ἀγγέλου θεοῦ or, in variant readings, υἱῷ θεοῦ (a reading followed by Brenton). However, given the mountain top setting and lack of peril it would seem unlikely that this passage is being evoked.

d) The High Mountain

Several commentators have felt the need to compensate for Mark's lack of geographical reference[636] but it is best left unspecified as Mark left it. The significance is typological rather than geographical. Gundry posits (drawing in verse one) that the mountain symbolizes power, citing Daniel 2:35, 44-45; Matthew 28:16-18; Revelation 17:9-10 "and many other passages, biblical and extrabiblical".[637] Whilst this forms rather a nice link to verse one, it places an unnecessary burden of interpretation upon the reader. Boobyer, in setting out his argument for the transfiguration to be a foretaste of the parousia, sees mountains as "an appropriate place for eschatological revelations" within Jewish and Christian literature.[638] Whilst this may be true, it is hardly the primary role of a mountain within the Old Testament. To be preferred, is the view that the mountain is a place of revelation[639] and encounter,[640] perhaps given its proximity to heaven.[641]

It has already been noted that the passage has its parallels with Exodus 24, and of course the mountain setting is of a piece with these,[642] but it would be a mistake to seek for links in Exodus 24 and nowhere else. Given what is to occur on the mountain, it is significant that both Moses and Elijah experience theophanies atop mountains.[643]

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636. e.g. Edwards, 2002, p263. Amongst earlier commentators, both Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem identify the mountain as Mount Tabor (Lee, 2004, p15). On this, see also Fuliga, 1995.
637. Gundry, 1993, p457. He makes mention of W. Foerster in TDNT 5. 476-78, 480-81. See also Collins, 2007, p421.
638. Boobyer, 1940, p127.
639. Anderson, 1976, p224, Nineham, 1963, p237, Hooker, 1991, p216. Lee, 2004, p14.
640. Edwards, 2002, p262.
641. Evans, 2001, p35, Iersel, 1998, p294. Heil, 2000, p154f.
642. Iersel, 1998, p294, Taylor, 1992, p218, Ziesler, 1970, p265. Standhartinger, 2003.
643. Exodus 24 and 1 Kings 19. Painter, 1997, p129, Lane, 1974, p318, Brooks, 1991, p142, Nineham, 1963, p237; Henderson, 2006, p216.

Moreover, the *high* mountain is evocative of the new Zion hoped for in (amongst other places) Isaiah 2:2-5.[644] Given the role of the Isaian New Exodus within this Gospel, this mountain-top location is significant:

> Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord
> and to the house of the God of Iakob,
> and he will declare to us his way,
> and we will walk in it. (2:3 LXX)[645]

> Go up on a high mountain,
> you who bring good tidings to Sion;
> lift up your voice with strength,
> you who bring good tidings to Ierousalem;
> lift it up; do not feard;
> say to the cities of Ioudas,
> "See, your God!" (40:9 LXX)

e) Metamorphosis

It is not uncommon for commentators to see in the transfiguration something of the experience of Moses in Exodus 34, but this comparison does not really stand. Mark makes no mention of any change to Jesus' face, only his clothes. This luminescence is not apparent to the disciples who remain at the foot of the mountain,[646] who show no fear. It is true that the three companions are terrified, but that is on the mountain rather than at the base. Once the transfiguration ends there is no fear. As with the walking on the water, Moses does not seem to be the target of the allusion.[647] Indeed, Luke and Matthew are more fulsome with their descriptions of Jesus and it may well be that Mark is cautious in his presentation of the transfiguration in order to avoid such an understanding.

Having said that, it is clear that a supernatural effect of some kind is in view. Jesus' clothing "became dazzling white" (στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν). Στίλβοντος is used in

644. Fischer, 2003.
645. The objection could, of course, be made that the New Exodus is a theme within Deutero-Isaiah. However, there is no evidence that Isaiah was divided up in such a manner within the Second Temple period.
646. Moss, 2004, p73.
647. Contra Evans, 2001, p35.

Ezekiel 40:3 to describe the narrator in his vision, and transformed clothing is also a feature of the narrating figure in 10:5-8.[648] As for the Ancient of Days, τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ χιὼν λευκόν.[649] In addition, Mark is insistent that this whiteness was beyond any achieved by bleaching and Lee suggests that "Mark is not speaking literally of white but rather the 'colour' of light, a light that transcends the natural world. It is a divine hue...".[650]

Within apocalyptic literature, one finds in Enoch 14:20 a vision is recorded where God is envisioned in similar terms:[651]

> And the Great and Glorious one sat upon it. His cloak was like the sun, bright and whiter than any snow (λευκότερον πάσης χιόνος).

All of this is to say that what is in view is not necessarily a transformation of Jesus himself, especially as Mark is silent on the matter. That the transformation is temporary is also revealing. Within apocalyptic literature changes similar to those described by Mark are permanent in their effect[652] and describe some change in nature, yet here Jesus returns to his ministry and apart from the three companions no-one is aware of what happened. This would suggest that what occurred was not a transformation, but a revelation.[653] In other words what is seen by the disciples is a glimpse of a reality rather than a transformation of nature. If Wright is correct in his view that Mark is best understood as an apocalypse, then this is one of those passages "designed to unveil the truth about who Jesus is through a series of revelatory moments".[654]

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648. Witherington III, 2001, p260, Myers & Lattea, 1996, p108.
649. Daniel 7:9 (LXX - parallel text). Evans, 2001, p36, Hooker, 1991, p216.
650. Lee, 2004, p15.
651. It should also be noted that this kind of metamorphosis (μετεμορφώθη) is reminiscent of the notion present in the wider culture of gods appearing in human form. Cf Moss, 2004, Collins, 2007, pp418ff and Collins, 2000, pp90-92.
652. Moss, 2004, p73..
653. Kasilowski has suggested a two stage process whereby Jesus is seen with Moses and Elijah (and thereby equated with them) and then seen to transcend them when he is metamorphosed. Kasilowski, 2002.
654. Wright, 2003, p620, Wright, 1992, pp390-396. C.f. also Chilton, 1981, p121.

All of this would tend to argue against the view that the transfiguration is a foretaste of a future event (be it resurrection, heavenly glorification or parousia).[655] As will become clear, the weight of allusion is not to a future event (absent, it should be noted, from Mark's Gospel as we have it) but to a past one.

f) Elijah and Moses

The appearance of Moses and Elijah is of importance to the episode[656] and their presence has given rise to many interpretations:[657]

a) they represent the Law and the Prophets;[658]

b) Jesus represents all those who have received wisdom within Israel, and is in conversation with the Law and the Prophets;[659]

c) both escaped death (in first century Jewish thought);[660]

d) both were translated (again, in first century thought);[661]

e) both underwent transformations;[662]

f) both were "rejected by the people, but vindicated by God";[663]

g) they represent Messianic hopes within the Qumran literature;[664]

h) both experienced theophanies on mountains;[665]

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655. Thrall, 1970, p309 notes the preponderance of this view.
656. Thrall, 1970, p305. She suggests this on the basis of the high proportion of verses they occupy.
657. Basser has noted that there is only one instance of Moses and Elijah appearing with a Messiah figure within Rabbinic literature (in the later Midrash Tehillim 42-43). Baser, 1998.
658. Brooks, 1991, p142, Myers & Lattea, 1996, p108, Taylor, 1992, pp221-222, Del Agua, 1993, p348.
659. Cariou-Charton, 2004.
660. Painter, 1997, p129. Hooker, 1991, p216, Anderson, 1976, p225. cf also Iersel, 1998, p295, Schmidt, 1992, p235, n27, Thrall, 1970, p314. Lee, 2004, p18. Collins, 2007, p422.
661. e.g. Philo *Moses* 2.288.
662. Brooks, 1991, p142.
663. Pamment, 1981, p339. Here she follows Leany (1966) *The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels* (Supplement to The New Zealand Theological Review: The Selwyn Lectures). A modified version of this view has been put forward by Heil, who writes "we propose that that the point of the epiphanic appearance of Moses and Elijah in conversation with the transfigured Jesus is to indicate to the Gospel audiences that although Jesus will attain heavenly glory like Moses and Elijah, he, unlike them, will do so by being raised by God after suffering the unjust death of a rejected prophet". Heil, 2000, pp99ff
664. Poirier, 2003a.
665. Hooker, 1991, p216, Williamson, 1983, p159, Gundry, 1993, p459, Baly, 1970, p83,

There are problems with the first (and second) interpretations. The phrase "the Law and the Prophets" occurs nowhere in Mark[666] and, moreover, Elijah is named first.[667] Within Jewish thought, Moses is thought of as the foremost *prophet* (cf. Deuteronomy 18) and it is in this connection that he is viewed as an eschatological figure (as is Elijah).[668] The words of verse seven echo Deuteronomy 18:15-19 which speak of Moses as a prophet.[669]

It is commonly held that the reason for their appearance is to show that the law and the prophets bear witness to Jesus, but it should be remembered that the disciples hear nothing and any such witness is thereby limited. Moreover if the rationale is that Jesus supersedes the law and the prophets and is thereby an authority greater than the books of Moses and the prophets,[670] one wonders why a prophet who did not write appears?[671]

It is true that within Jewish thought both of these figures escaped death ("unexplained exceptions"[672]) and were translated to heaven,[673] but then so was Enoch and he is absent from this scene. In fact pairings of Enoch and Elijah are more common in Jewish literature.[674]

That they both underwent transformations requires some interpolating of Elijah's translation and, in any case, neither figure is described as transformed in the passage.[675] Jesus is portrayed as different from Elijah and Moses and this parallel seems circumstantial, as does the suffering and vindication motif which is true of

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Chilton, 1981, p122. Standhartinger, 2003. Hooker, 1987, p61.

666. Taylor, 1992, p222.
667. Hooker, 1991, p216. Although Heil argues that in Markan usage the latter named is usually the more important, and he suggests a paraphrase of "not only Elijah but even Moses!". Heil, 1999.
668. Anderson, 1976, p226, Pamment, 1981, p338, Ziesler, 1970, p266. Lee, 2004, p17f.
669. Anderson, 1976, p226, Williamson, 1983, p159, Marcus, 2009, p632.
670. Thus Nineham, 1963, p234-5.
671. Thrall, 1970, p308, Caird, 1956, p291.
672. Wright, 2003, pp94-95.
673. Schmidt, 1992, p235, n27, Thrall, 1970, p314. There is an extended discussion of the tradition in Heil, 2000, pp100ff.
674. Gundry, 1993, p478. Here he cites Jeremias, TDNT 2. 938-39.
675. Gundry, 1993, p458.

other prophets too. In fact the sufferings of Elijah and Moses were not of a piece as Moses was acknowledged leader of the people, even if they grumbled. It may be argued that the period of upbringing in Pharaoh's household constituted a sojourn in a hostile environment, but there is no evidence that this was the case or that Moses suffered in these exalted surroundings.

Drawing upon the Qumran literature Poirer has concluded that Moses and Elijah 'probably' represent a hope for a prophetic messiah and priestly messiah respectively.[676] If this is a hope which is represented within wider Judaism then we have here Jesus being portrayed as transcending this eschatological pairing. Whilst Poirier is right in saying that some of the Qumran hopes are found within wider Judaism too, there is no evidence of this particular hope outside their literature. This is therefore a suggestive possibility, but one which has less certainty than the option which follows.[677]

The final option makes most sense of the pairing. Both Moses and Elijah were witnesses of theophanies on mountain tops and here they witness something similar. Their appearance would evoke memories of the events of Sinai and Horeb[678] which in turn would provide an interpretive key to the passage as a whole. It is also worth noting that it is Moses and Elijah who encountered the Voice of God, as discussed above. These parallels are stronger than others which have been suggested, and Moses and Elijah are best viewed as speaking with the LORD who again is revealed to them by means of a mountain-top theophany. This is not to suggest that they are the sole (or even main) recipients of the transfiguration, but rather that their presence serves to underline that the transfiguration is to be understood as a theophany.

g) Peter's Speech

Peter's confusion is evident from the passage. He calls Jesus Rabbi, which is not necessarily a downgrading of his identification of Jesus as the Messiah in the

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676. "The Qumran sectarians expected both a priestly messiah and an endtime Prophet, figures that were probably equated with an eschatological return of Elijah and Moses, respectively". Poirier, 2003a, p241.
677. This hope may be better mirrored within Christian literature by the witnesses of Revelation 11.
678. Standhartinger, 2003, Marcus, 2009, p632.

previous chapter.[679] The title is an honorific one,[680] but not one found used of the risen Jesus. Some suggest that Peter's desire to build three tents shows him to understand that Moses, Elijah and Jesus are of equal importance and that there is no real understanding of Jesus 'status'.[681] This desire, coupled with the calling of Jesus as Rabbi, would suggest that this is a correct interpretation.

Quite why Peter wanted to build booths is not clear, maybe even to Peter himself, and given Mark's comment in verse six it is probably not wise to read too much into Peter's words or attempt to discern his intentions.[682] Within first century Judaism there is an apocalyptic flavour to the Festival of Tabernacles given the words of Zechariah 14:16-19 (alongside Leviticus 23:33-6 and Deuteronomy 16:13-15) and some speculate that this is behind Peter's actions.[683] Here, perhaps, an echo of the Isaian New Exodus? However, as Lee comments, if this is the case then it is puzzling that Peter only offers to construct three tabernacles rather than the six needed to accommodate the disciples, Jesus, Moses and Elijah.[684] Moreover, there is

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679. Gundry, 1993, p459-460, contra Painter, 1997, p129.
680. Gundry, 1993, p459. Marcus cautions against an assumption that the later, technical understanding of "Rabbi" is current in the New Testament period. See his discussion in Marcus, 2009, p633 and also Lapin, 1992. Cohen, after surveying the epigraphical evidence concludes: "If we allow the epigraphical evidence to speak for itself and do not impose upon it ideas derived from literary sources, we may reach the following conclusions from our analysis of the catalogue of forty-eight inscriptions: for centuries "rabbi" remained a popular title which could describe individuals who were not part of that Hebrew and Aramaic-speaking society which produced the Talmud; synagogues in both Israel and the diaspora were not led by men titled 'rabbis'; the Rabbinic presence in the diaspora was meager." Cohen, 1981, p16. It is safe to say, therefore, that the title is honorific, but may not at this stage carry connotations which attach themselves to the title in later times.
681. Hooker, 1991, p217, cf also Thrall, 1970, pp308-309.
682. Collins suggests that the Tabernacle is in view, and that Peter is proposing to found a new cult (hence the three tents) as a response to the epiphany of the three figures. Whilst this could be argued against the wider Greco-Roman context, it is surely placing too much weight on that context in this instance. Collins, 2007, p424. Similarly unlikely is the view that there are echoes here of Jonah's sojourn in the whale, since Peter is the 'Son of Jonah'. Derrett, 1990. For an earlier discussion on the Jonah imagery, see Lapide, 1980, pp37ff.
683. e.g. Del Agua, 1993, p349. However, as Hooker, notes the disciples do not appear to wish to build booths for themselves, and there is no other mention of the festival within the passage. Hooker, 1987, pp64ff.
684. Lee, 2004, p19. In this section she lists three possibilities, to which I have added the ironic usage as a fourth.

no referent to the Feast elsewhere in the passage.[685]

A similar problem lies behind the second of the possibilities dismissed by Lee[686] that the tent of meeting is in view. If that is the case, why *three* tents? Also the Tent of Meeting was intended for the divine presence, not glorified figures such as Moses or Elijah.[687] The third possibility that Lee puts forward is that an apocalyptic event is in view, in particular the dwelling of the righteous with the angels:[688]

> [3]And in those days a whirlwind carried me off from the earth,
> And set me down at the end of the heavens.
> [4]And there I saw another vision, the dwelling-places of the holy,
> And the resting-places of the righteous.
> [5]Here mine eyes saw their dwellings with His righteous angels,
> And their resting-places with the holy. (1 Enoch 39:3-5a)

> [13]And after great praise and glory had been given to the Lord, and Abraham bowed down to worship, there came the undefiled voice of the God and Father saying thus, [14]"Take therefore my friend Abraham into Paradise, where are the tabernacles of my righteous ones, and the abodes of my saints Isaac and Jacob in his bosom, where there is no trouble, nor grief, nor sighing, but peace and rejoicing and life unending." (Testament of Abraham A 20:13-14)

In this view, Jesus is wearing "the garments of heaven"[689] and thereby shows his heavenly provenance.

Given all this, it should be acknowledged that an attempt to seek a single referent for an allusion such as this would be unnecessarily reductionist.[690] Equally, it is not improbable that there is an ironic usage of τρεῖς σκηνάς. There is a growing awareness of the use of irony in Mark's Gospel[691] and it would not seem far-fetched

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685. Heil, 2000, p117.
686. Lee, 2004, p20.
687. Heil, 2000, p117.
688. cf, also, Heil, 2000, p118.
689. See the clothing worn in such passages as 1 Enoch 62:15; 2 Enoch 22:8-10; 4 Ezra 2:39; Revelation 3:5; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 19:14). cf. Hooker, 1987, pp60ff.
690. See the discussion in Heil, 2000, chapter 6. He suggests that there are three ideas at play in this passage: the Feast of Tabernacles, the Tent of Meeting and the "eternal heavenly dwellings for the righteous" (Heil, 2000, p120).

to see something of this in the passages. Peter speaks the truth without realizing it, as will be seen once the cloud is discussed.[692]

h) The Enveloping Cloud

Within the Old Testament a cloud such as that which envelops the disciples is symbolic of the presence of the LORD[693] Some postulate that the cloud also is reminiscent of the cloud on which the Son of Man comes,[694] but there are significant differences between the two. In the parousia Jesus is absent and then returns, here he is present before and after the transfiguration. The Son of Man comes with the clouds (Mark 13:26; 14:62), here a single cloud envelops him.[695] It is unlikely that the parousia is in view here.

The theophanic cloud par excellence settled at Sinai during the giving of the law, and the coupling of cloud and voice at the Transfiguration is highly suggestive of Exodus 24:16. Elsewhere, the cloud is a visible sign of the presence of God, most overpoweringly at the Tent of Meeting in Exodus 40:35 and the dedication of the Temple in 1 Kings 8:10-11,[696] and most significantly at the Exodus.[697]

The closest linguistic parallel is the passage describing the Tent of Meeting in Exodus 40:35, the only occurrence of an 'overshadowing cloud' in the Old Testament:[698]

> And Moyses was unable to enter into the tent of witness, because the cloud was overshadowing it (ὅτι ἐπεσκίαζεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἡ νεφέλη), and the tent was filled with the glory of the Lord.

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691. Edwards, 2002, p12. This area has been thoroughly tackled in Camery-Hoggatt, 1991.
692. Chilton, 1981, p121 calls the booths "integral to the narrative". Caird is apposite: "There was no need for three tabernacles, nor even for one. For Jesus was Himself the new tabernacle of the Divine glory, who gathered up in His own person all the transient and fragmentary revelations of the past, transcending them all". Caird, 1956, p293.
693. Witherington III, 2001, p264, Gundry, 1993, p460, Hooker, 1991, p217, Lane, 1974, p320, Collins, 2007, p425.
694. e.g. Anderson, 1976, p226.
695. Ziesler, 1970, p267.
696. Edwards, 2002, p267.
697. Painter, 1997, p130, Williamson, 1983, p158.
698. c.f. Hooker, 1991, p218, Evans, 2001, p37, Del Agua, 1993, p349-50.

If one takes the transfiguration as a whole, there are verbal links to Moses: the cloud, overshadowing and the tent. It is not out of the question that Mark is deliberately using Peter's misunderstanding to evoke this passage: three tents are inappropriate, but one tent is. In support of this view, one sees similar language in Exodus 33:9, where there is not only the tabernacle/tent and the cloud but also God talking with Moses:

> And whenever Moyses entered into the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the doors of the tent and would speak to Moyses.

It would seem, therefore, that what is in view here is not a foretaste of the parousia, but a theophany with the main evocation being the tent of meeting.[699]

i) The voice

The words spoken from the cloud may have some echo of Deuteronomy 18:22,[700] although Gundry doubts this on the grounds of the word order and the imperative mood.[701] Even if the allusion is present, there is greater significance in the first phrase which identifies Jesus. The words serve to distinguish Jesus from Moses and Elijah and correct the misunderstanding of the disciples as to their relative status[702] The account then closes with a sudden return to normality.

Given the discussion of the Voice of God earlier, one might wish to make comment on the appearance of the voice here. However, it is within John's gospel that the theme of the Voice is more prevalent and within Mark there is no engagement with the theme.

j) The Transfiguration and the Theophany Type Scene

As would be expected in a theophanic scene, there is a separation of the recipients - this time the 'inner circle' of James, John and Peter - from the remainder of the

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699. Brooks, 1991, p143. contra Thrall, 1970, p309 who assumes a coherence between Peter and Mark's thought.
700. Thrall, 1970, p314, Ziesler, 1970, p267 et al.
701. Gundry, 1993, p461.
702. Thrall, 1970, p305, Painter, 1997, p130. Lee, 2004, p23.

disciples. These three are led by Jesus up to what is a significant location, as has been discussed above

Next, Jesus is transfigured before them and Moses and Elijah appear with him. As has been observed, these two have experienced such mountain-top theophanies before. Moreover, it is significant that both these prophets have experienced multiple theophanies. As Savran has noted, the encounters in Exodus 33 and 1 Kings 19 are not *introduced* by a visual aspect since the mode of communication, which the visual theophany serves to establish, is already present.[703] Hence, the two prophets converse with Jesus whilst the disciples are terrified. This also suggests that these two figures are viewed as theophanic recipients *par excellence* since they are multiple recipients and that this explains the fact that their conversing with Jesus does not occasion any introduction from Mark. It is also noteworthy that the LORD 'passed by' both these prophets, which has lexical connections with the theophany on the water discussed above.

The response of the disciples is fear, as is the pattern for theophany, and Peter manifests "a degree of psychological uncertainty"[704] and suggests the making of three tents (σκηνάς). One wonders, given the erection of the tabernacle (σκηνὴ) after the theophany at Sinai whether the presence on a mountain with Moses brings this to Peter's mind. Whatever the case may be, the narrator is clear that the comment is a result of not knowing what to say because of fear.

As is the case with the theophany on the water in chapter six the disciples are addressed after their expression of fear, this time by a disembodied voice.

Savran's final move in the theophany type scene is that of externalization. It is possible that the request to build booths is an attempt by Peter to give the theophany

703. Savran, 2005, p16.

704. Savran, 2005, p20. He is here speaking, of course, of the Old Testament theophanies but the observation is apposite here too.

a permanent expression. However, the externalisation would appear to be Jesus himself since "[s]uddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus". After all, the theophany figure has not disappeared - as is the norm - but remains with the disciples in an 'unglorified' fashion. The attempts by the disciples to continue and externalize the event would therefore be fulfilled by the questioning of Jesus by the disciples.

Given the context of the 'two-stage' healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, it should be borne in mind that often the role of theophany is to engender a new understanding. Sarvan notes the phenomenon of:

> ...the refocussing of the protagonist's understanding that is common to theophany narratives. It often reflects the essential shift in the individual's perception of reality when confronted with a manifestation of the divine.[705]

k) The Transfiguration as the Centre of the Gospel

In his 2004 article surveying the state of scholarship on the structure of Mark's Gospel, Larsen wrote:

> While a principle for determining Markan structure is under debate, near unanimous consent exists for a distinct section in the middle of the Gospel, beginning at either 8.22 or 8.27 and ending at 10.45 or 10.52.... Many Markan scholars would consider the Caesarea Philippi episode as the central pericope and turning point of the Gospel[706]

This therefore raises questions for the interpretation offered above, since it argues for the Transfiguration, and not the confession by Peter at Caesarea Philippi, as the centre point of the Gospel. One possible solution to this is to follow Myers in proposing three "apocalyptic moments ... placed like structural pillars at the beginning (Jesus' baptism), midpoint (Jesus' transfiguration, and end of the story".[707] These three operate as narrative spurs by identifying Jesus' mission, by deepening it and then death. Moreover, Myers identifies thematic links:[708]

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705. Savran, 2005, p20.
706. Larsen, 2004, p141f.
707. Myers, 1990, p391.
708. Myers, 1990, p392.

	Baptism	Transfiguration	Crucifixion
a)	heavens rent dove descends	garments turn white cloud descends	sanctuary veil rent darkness spreads
b)	voice from heaven	voice from cloud	Jesus' great voice
c)	"You are my son, beloved"	"This is my son, beloved"	Truly, this man was son of God
d)	John the Baptist as Elijah	Jesus appears with Elijah	"Is he calling Elijah?"

Myer's analysis would suggest that to ignore the Transfiguration as forming a key part of the turning point of the Gospel is to underestimate its importance. However, there is no reason why this interpretation need preclude the common view of a high-point at Caesarea Philippi. Rather, it is possible to extend the Caesarea pericope to see the Transfiguration as being of a piece with the confession of Peter. The immediate context of the 'two-stage' healing of blindness would suggest that a two-stage unveiling of Christ is to follow.

The text itself also links the two passages. The unusual Markan device of temporally linking the Transfiguration to the preceding passage would imply that these two are to be taken as a pair, much as was the case for the feeding of the five thousand. Additionally, the discussion of the role of Elijah and John the Baptist frames these two events and gives them a thematic coherence. Lee similarly argues for a two-stage highlight or, to use her language, "a diptych that stands at the heart of the Markan narrative"[709] whereby the suffering Christ of Caesarea Philippi is complemented by the glorified Christ of the Transfiguration.

Reproduced overleaf is a table from Lee which sets out her understanding of the function of the passages:[710]

709. Lee, 2004, p10.
710. Lee, 2004, p11.

Introduction	PANEL 1: SUFFERING (villages of C.P.)	Transition	PANEL 2: GLORY (mountain)	Conclusion
• Secrecy of revelation • Role of Elijah and John the Baptist • Disciples' lack of understanding (8:27-30)	Revelation of Jesus to disciples as suffering Son of Man, who will rise from the dead and return in glory (8:31-8)	Seeing God's reign come in power (9:1)	Revelation of Jesus to three disciples as beloved son, transfigured in radiance and light (9:2-9)	• Secrecy of revelation • Role of Elijah and John the Baptist • Disciples' lack of understanding (9:10-13)

In this view, both events are halves of the whole, linked by 9:1 "And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power'". It must be acknowledged that the probable referent here is to the presence of the risen Christ with his disciples, but to reduce the saying to a single referent would be unjustified.[711] In the Caesarea Philippi/Transfiguration some of those standing with Christ at Caesarea Philippi do indeed see "that the kingdom of God has come with power". That this may be a later, Markan repositioning of the saying is irrelevant to the task at hand, since it is this Markan layer which is under investigation.

The events of the Transfiguration act as a high point of revelation prior to the journey to Jerusalem and ultimately death.[712] The Caesarea Philippi/Transfiguration event thus operates as the central hinge in Mark's Gospel with its focus on the two titles operating within Mark's Gospel: the son of God and Jesus Christ. The Gospel opens with "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" and this pairing is given narrative form when Jesus is heralded by Peter as the Messiah in 8:29 and revealed as the Son of God in the Transfiguration. At the crucifixion the theme returns again as the centurion acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God as he is crucified for being a Messianic figure - the King of the Jews.

711. Lee, 2004, p10.
712. Kasilowski, 2002.

l) Conclusion

Chilton writes: "*At the level of tradition and redaction, it is beyond reasonable doubt that the Transfiguration is fundamentally a visionary representation of the Sinai motif of Exod. 24*".[713] That there are links to the Sinai cannot be denied, but to try to allegorize the passage so that it refers to only one event is a mistake. In his rather technical article, Del Agua argues that the passage is best treated as "a combination of different forms producing an authentic new literary composition"[714] (in other words a *Collective Narrative)* and further refines this as Scenificated Derash, being

> a literary representation of an action, within a definite space and time, by means of allusion to types, motives, and 'topoi' of the biblical tradition, in order to make a theological interpretation of a current event or teaching.[715]

It is important, therefore, not to try and decode the passage in terms of an allusion to a specific event, but rather build up a picture of the theological import of the passage based upon the distinctive allusions. In this instance we may identify the following:

i) the six days which evoke Exodus 24;

ii) the mountain as reminiscent of theophany;

iii) the temporary transformation of Jesus as a revelation;

iv) the presence of the two Old Testament figures who experience mountain top theophanies involving glory;

v) the presence of tabernacle language;

vi) the enveloping cloud with its evocation of the tabernacle;

vii) as a climax, the identification of Jesus as God's son.

The motif which best makes sense of these disparate allusions is that of theophany with Jesus playing the role of the presence of God.[716] Jesus does not play the part of Moses, who is in any case present, and those who accompany him are precisely those who witnessed such an event in the past. The six days, the mountain, Elijah, Moses, the luminescence, the tabernacles, the enveloping cloud and the voice separately

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713. Chilton, 1981. p122. Emphasis his. See also Marcus, 1992, pp82ff for a discussion of this parallelism, as well as Collins, 2007, p417.
714. Del Agua, 1993, p345.
715. Del Agua, 1993, p345-46.
716. Thus, amongst others, Jeremias, 1977, Müller, 1960, Collins, 2007.

allude to theophany and their presence together gives an overwhelming witness to that type of event. Thus Lane writes:

> The transfiguration is presented in the terminology of a theophany which reveals the powerful coming of the Kingdom of God.[717]

A further point may be made here, although not one central to the argument. Moss has recently discussed the notion of accommodation to audience within Mark's writing in the context of Hellenistic tradition.[718] After all Mark is living within a thoroughly Hellenized context and is writing to those from a Hellenistic worldview (even if that worldview is secondary). Examining Mark's narrative from this point of view, one finds many features of Hellenistic epiphany stories where the god appears in human form, and goes unrecognized. Whilst it is undeniable that Mark is drawing upon many Jewish motifs,[719] these findings would tend to confirm the theophanic reading of the Transfiguration.

One objection to the reading of the Transfiguration in terms of theophany is that it ignores the Messianic motifs contained within Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. That needn't be the case if, as is being argued, the Transfiguration is the granting of clearer sight (cf the healing of the blind man discussed above). Thus, what we have is the recasting of Messianic hopes in terms of the Isaianic New Exodus - the two needn't be mutually exclusive. Thus it is that Peter's confession and the Transfiguration operate together as the 'dyptich' at the heart of Mark's Gospel.

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717. Lane, 1974, p317. For another account of the transfiguration as a theophany, see Kasilowski, 2002. He suggests a two stage process whereby Jesus is equated with the two other figures initially, and then revealed to be the Son of God.
718. Moss, 2004.
719. As an example of purported Jewish background, Heil argues that the angelophanies to Gideon (Judg 6:11-24) and to Manoah and his wife (Judg 13:2-24) provide the litereray basis for understanding the Transfiguration. Whereas one might see similarities, the wider context of Mark's Gospel would suggest that the it is the LORD in view here.

V. The Returning LORD

The opening verses of Mark's Gospel immediately introduce the theme of the New Exodus to the reader:[720]

> [1:1]The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
>
> [2]As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
> "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
> who will prepare your way;
>
> [3]the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
> 'Prepare the way of the Lord,
> make his paths straight'

In making this introduction three passages are conflated: Exodus 23:20; Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. That these three texts are juxtaposed strongly suggests that Mark both knows and is making use of the New Exodus tradition and, moreover, he has identified the LORD of Isaiah 40:3 with Christ.

Against this background, the entry into Jerusalem in Mark 11 can be seen as dealing with the returning LORD.[721] Exodus imagery is heightened by the repeated use of ὁδός (10:46, 52; 11:8),[722] and the Feeding of the Five Thousand and Walking on the Water episodes can be viewed as incidents on the 'way'. Moreover, in Isaiah 40:3 it is the LORD who is returning, not simply his people.[723] As will be seen, the passage is more than patient of this interpretation.

a) The Mount of Olives

The significance of the Mount of Olives in Mark's narrative is often viewed against the backdrop of Zechariah 14:4-5 (LXX):

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720. Hooker comments that the importance of Isaiah for Mark is reflected in his beginning the Gospel with a quotation attributed to Mark. Hooker, 2005, p35. On this, see also Marcus, 1992, pp1ff and pp18ff.
721. This is an important point, and one that suggests that the identification of Jesus with Moses in a New Exodus is a false move. The way is the LORD's way, not simply the way in which the LORD wants his people to return (cf the comments at Marcus, 2000, p148).
722. Catchpole, 1985, p319.
723. Marcus, 2000, p148.

> [4]And on that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, which is opposite Ierousalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall be split, half of it to the east and half of it to the sea, an exceedingly great chasm, and half of the Mount shall incline northward and half of it southward... [5]And the Lord my God will come and all the holy ones with him.

The scene in Zechariah 14 similarly depicts a return of the LORD, this time in the guise of a Divine Warrior who, for Zechariah, is a figure with eschatological overtones.[724]

The consequences of this will be considered below, but another textual background should be borne in mind. Ezekiel 11:23 comes within the vision that Ezekiel has of the glory of the LORD leaving the Temple: "and the glory of the LORD ascended from the middle of the city, and stopped on the mountain east of the city".[725] The mountain to the east of the city is, of course, the Mount of Olives (as Zechariah explicitly states) and it is from here that Ezekiel later sees the LORD returning:

> [1]And he led me to the gate that looks to the east and brought me out, [2]and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming by way of the gate that looks to the east, and there was a sound of the camp like a sound of many doubling up, and the earth was shining forth like splendour from the glory all around ... [4]And the glory of the Lord went into the house by way of the gate that looks to the east. (Ezekiel 43:1-2, 4 LXX)

This returning theophany is important in the context of the New Exodus theme explored earlier, and Mark's rare geographical reference would suggest that the entry into Jerusalem is best understood against this background. Here, at last, is the return of the LORD to Zion.

b) The Colt

Mark does not cite Zechariah's mention of the colt, although it would likely be in the mind of his readers. The context is a returning king who is "humble and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

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724. Duff, 1992, p58. Marcus, 2009, p772.
725. Edwards, 2002, p334.

That the colt has never been ridden has been interpreted as giving honour to the first rider.[726] Certainly there is a stress within Mark that no-one has sat upon the beast, as the trenchant Greek shows: "ἐφ᾽ ὃν οὐδεὶς οὔπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν". It would seem that the disciples did not ride the colt back to Jesus and, on reaching him, they then threw their cloaks over the beast in an action reminiscent of Jehu in 2 Kings 9:13:

> Then hurriedly they all took their cloaks and spread them for him on the bare steps; and they blew the trumpet, and proclaimed, "Jehu is king."

There are also royal overtones to this choice of beast, with evidence of kings using donkeys to make entrances within the wider Ancient Near East.[727] This is significant, given the patterns of triumphant entry which will now be considered.

c) The Entry into Jerusalem

The returning LORD theme is further strengthened by the imagery of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. One little discussed background to interpreting this episode - a background which would certainly be well known within the first century - is that of the παρουσία or Greco-Roman triumphant entry.[728] This is surprising given the identification of παρουσία imagery elsewhere within the New Testament (e.g. 2 Corinthians 2:14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as well as the usage of the term in Matthew 24). Moreover, such events were widespread throughout the Empire, as inscriptions and papyrus records indicate.[729] This evidence for the triumphant entry would suggest it is an event that would be well known within Judea, not least given Alexander's entry into Jerusalem.[730]

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726. Gundry, 1993, p628. In support of this view he cites Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3; 1 Samuel 6:7; 2 Samuel 6:3; Zechariah 9:9 (LXX). Derrett has noted that the Mishnah contains a prohibition on anyone riding an animal once ridden by a king. Derrett, 1971, p238f.
727. See the discussion in Hanfmann, 1985.
728. Kinman, considering the account in Luke, notes the absence of the theme in the commentaries on that Gospel. Recent decades have seen a growing appreciation of the wider Roman and Hellenistic contexts of Second Temple.
729. Kinman, 1995, p27f. See Deissmann, 1927, pp368-373, for a survey of evidence. Kinman also mentions numismatic evidence and literary materials.
730. Josephus *Ant.* XI.8.5. Even if this account is fictional, it still demonstrates that the notion of a triumphant entry is known within Judaism at the time. Indeed, the fact that Alexander goes on to honour the LORD suggests that Josephus is giving an ironic twist

1) The Parousia

Over time, and especially as the παρουσία (or *adventus*) became associated with the Principate, there came to be an increasingly "messianic" flavour to the proceedings, even amongst Jews.[731] The *adventus* involves a response to the person of the recipient, his character and his status rather than simply an acknowledgement of great deeds (for which the Triumph is appropriate).[732] With regard to the Greco-Roman παρουσία Duff argues that:

> In the politically motivated processions of the Greco-Roman period, the appearance of a conqueror or ruler before the gates of a city was frequently treated as the epiphany of a new god, and as a result, the subsequent procession escorting the ruler into the city took on the characteristics of the entrance of a deity.[733]

The *adventus* or παρουσία would follow a normal pattern whereby the entering ruler or conqueror is met at the gates of the city by its leading inhabitants who then escort him into the city to an accompaniment of hymns. Those accompanying the ruler into the city would also carry flowers, olive or palm-branches, lights and incense. The conqueror is also accompanied by his army or retinue.[734]

It is not uncommon for these entries to take on epiphanic hues[735] as can be seen from the welcome given to Demetrius I by the Athenians:

> not only did the Athenians welcome him with offerings of incense and wreaths ... they sang and danced repeating the refrain that he was the only true god ... and they fell at

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to a well known tradition.

731. Kinman, 1995, p29. He notes the welcomes given to Augustus, Caligula, Nero and Trajan and the descriptions given in Virgil *Aenead* 1:190f, 6:791-795 as well as Philo *Embassy* 11-13.
732. Kinman, 1995, p30-31. He writes: "As a final note, it may be observed that the people who were given special welcomes were received, ostensibly, on account of their personal status and charisma rather than by virtue of military exploits alone. This is true for the emperor as well, who was welcomed, at the least because he was the ruler of Rome; at the most, he was the approaching divine saviour and benefactor of the world. While personal charisma was not normally separated from military prowess, the Triumph and the παρουσία were distinct."
733. Duff, 1992, p59. Kinman does not engage directly with Duff in his book, which is a PhD thesis submitted in 1993. He does offer a critique in a footnote and feels that Duff rather over-eggs the pudding with regard to the role of the temple in the entry ceremonies.
734. MacCormack, 1972, p723. See also the discussions in Catchpole, 1985, Duff, 1992, Kinman, 1995, chapter three and Collins, 2007, pp514ff.
735. Duff, 1992, p59: "The political entrance processions of the Greco-Roman world were an outgrowth of Greek epiphany processions".

his feet and addressed supplications and prayers to him.[736]

Mithridates IV was hailed by embassies as "god" and "saviour" and similarly feted at his παρουσία.[737] Whilst the acclaim of divinity was less in the Roman west, it is still the case that the Emperors enjoyed great welcomes in a similar manner.

The goal of this procession is the city's temple,[738] where the entering figure will offer sacrifice and thereby take possession of the city.[739] This latter action is, Duff suggests, the highpoint of the παρουσία and of decisive importance as Alexander the Great's siege of Tyre following the city's refusal to allow him to make sacrifice illustrates.[740] However, it should be noted that not all παρουσία accounts make mention of temple visits which may suggest that the practice was not universal.

The parallels with the entry into Jerusalem are clear enough: Jesus enters Jerusalem with his 'army' and is accompanied by hymns of acclamation from those who are around him. His status is recognised by the laying of cloaks or palms in the road and he visits the temple,[741] although it is at this point that the pattern is varied, which will be considered below.

It is true that there are other classes of ceremonial entries within the Greco-Roman world - Kinman considers the assizes of the governor, and the Triumph - but the παρουσία/*adventus* would have the strongest resonance for the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. This is all the more so given the visit of Vitellius to Jerusalem recorded

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736. Athenaeus, *Deipn.*, 6.253c. cf Kinman, 1995, p32. Athenaeus is citing Democharis.
737. Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist.* 27.26.1.
738. Kinman, 1995, p33.
739. Duff, 1992, p62, cf also p66. Collins comments that "from this perspective, the statement 'And he went into Jerusalem to the temple precinct' ... is what one would expect, given the typical features of ancient celebratory processions". Collins, 2007, p521.
740. Duff, 1992, p61. He also notes some important differences with the Roman Triumphs where a feast rather than a sacrifice takes place in the Temple. Also, the general is entering his own city rather than that which was conquered.
741. Collins notes that the spreading of cloaks in the path of an dignitary is not unknown in Roman culture. Plutarch records cloaks being spread in front of Cato (*Cat. Min.* 12). Collins, 2007, p519.

by Josephus.[742]

Duff has suggested that there is great merit in viewing the entry into Jerusalem against the twin backgrounds of the Zecharian Divine Warrior and the Greco-Roman traditions of the entry of leaders into cities. Watts is not dismissive of this idea, but rather prefers an Isaian theme which given his overall argument is not surprising. However, to argue for a lone interpretative background does not do justice to the melting pot that was Second Temple theology.

2) The Zecharian Divine Warrior

Duff's argument is that the Greco-Roman entry protocol has been conflated with the Zecharian Divine Warrior theme. The starting point of the Mount of Olives has already been mentioned, and accompaniment of the LORD by the 'holy ones' (Zechariah 14:5) would find its echo in the disciples' presence. The temple is indeed entered and 'appropriated' by the driving out of the traders and money-changers. Or rather, the temple is 'disqualified'.[743] The ejection of the traders recalls Zechariah 14:20 and, it is argued, the vessels in the Temple in Mark 11:16 evokes Zechariah 14:20f.[744]

Kinman has considered two further Jewish backgrounds, which would serve to give nuance to any interpretation, as follows:

3) Israelite Kingship Ritual

As noted above, the laying of cloaks on the colt echoes the actions when Jehu was proclaimed king, but there are more similarities to the proclamation/reception of Israelite Kings than simply that. The acclamations are taken from the Old Testament and the use of Davidic language is clearly royal. The laying down of palms is a further echo of Jehu's acclamation.

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742. *Ant.* 15.11.4.
743. Duff, 1992, p70.
744. Evans is another who holds that "Jesus consciously patterend his entry into and ministry within the city of Jerusalem in the light of themes and imagery found in this prophetic book". Evans, 2002, p375.

Catchpole has made a list of a dozen of such entries, with parallels to the παρουσία noted above.[745] Alexander enters both Jerusalem and Shechem, and Apollonius enters Jerusalem. Of more significance to the Second Temple Jews is the return of Judas Maccabaeus: "So they went up to Mount Zion with joy and gladness, and offered burnt offerings" (1 Maccabees 5:54) as well as the entry of Simon in 1 Maccabees 13 which is accompanied by "praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs".

4) The Ark of the Covenant

Kinsman has wondered whether the entry of the Ark into Jerusalem provides an interpretative background to the entry into Jerusalem.[746] He notes that the theme is prevalent in the Psalms[747] and suggests that the account of the entry of the Ark in 2 Samuel 6 forms a well known tradition. It is certainly the case that the tradition was well known enough for the Chronicler to not only report it, but to use "his cultic *traditum* to *explain* an ancient episode in normative terms".[748] Within Mark it is possible to see some allusions to this theme, for example in the insistence of the use of an unused colt (cf 2 Samuel 6:3 and the unused cart).

The significance here is that it is the LORD who enters into Zion as king in this tradition but, it should be acknowledged, it is rather easier to hold to this interpretation in Luke than in Mark[749] but nonetheless this 'divine entry' motif is a suggestive one to add into the interpretative matrix.

5) The Isaian New Exodus

Whilst there are no direct parallels to the Isaian New Exodus, Watts suggests - tentatively - that "it is possible that there are also echoes" of this theme as set out in Isaiah 35. He gives five "conceptual correspondences":

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745. Catchpole, 1985, pp319ff.
746. Kinman, 1995, p58f. He is considering the Gospel of Luke, but the argument is applicable to all Gospels as it concerns the worldview of late Second Temple Judaism rather than one particular community.
747. He mentions LXX Psalms 23:7-10; 46:6ff; 67:24-27 and 131.
748. Fishbane, 1985, p394.
749. So Watts, 1997, p308. For the application in Luke see Kinman, 1995, pp91ff.

> A) the coming of Yahweh's presence in Jesus, the Son of God and Yahweh-Warrior with vengeance 'to save' (11:9f; Isa 35:4), B) the blind man is encouraged (10:49; cf. Isa 35:4), and is thus 'saved' (10:52; cf. Isa 35:4), C) they are on the 'Way' (10:52; cf 46; Isa 35:8), D) they enter Zion with joy (11:, 8f; cf. Isa 35:10), and E) declare the praises of God (11:10b, ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις; cf. Isa 35:2, τὸ ὕψος τοῦ θεοῦ). What we seem to have here in the celebratory 'entry' of the Son of God and victorious Warrior accompanied by his healed people into Jerusalem is the Markan equivalent of the climax of the INE.[750]

However, there is merit in viewing this incident against the wider use of this theme within Mark. Marcus has suggested that the opening of the Gospel introduces the theme of the "triumphant march of the holy warrior, Yahweh, leading his people through the wilderness to their true homeland in a mighty demonstration of saving power".[751] Yet for Marcus this return occurs in a paradoxical manner so that it is the disciples who fulfil the return of Israel to Zion and the victory of the Divine Warrior occurs on the cross.[752]

An interpretation of the theme, which would require less subversion, would be to view the entry into Jerusalem as the long hoped for return of the LORD to Zion. This view is supported by the opening to the Gospel which includes, amongst other sources, Malachi 3:1, "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple". Watts has noted that Malachi is evoked elsewhere in the Gospel and if the introduction to the Gospel provides a thematic key, one would expect to find this return to the Temple present within the Gospel.

It has been objected that the reference to the temple itself is absent from the opening formula as used by Mark, and that priority should therefore be given to the new narrative context of the quotation as opposed to the original context.[753] The unfolding narrative theme of the return of the LORD to Zion provides such a context

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750. Watts, 1997, p309.
751. Marcus, 1992, p29.
752. Marcus, 1992, p36.
753. Hatina, 2002, p159. He later writes: "... the embedding of scripture texts within a new narrative complicates the search for a specific interpretive antecedent since the meaning of the embedded text is necessarily determined by its new literary context". Hatina, 2006, p81.

for the extension of the quotation (in the mind of the implied reader) to include the reference to the Temple.

6) The Entry of the Returning LORD

Given all the foregoing, what can be said for the entry in light of the theophany motif? Firstly, the nature of the welcome is consonant with the welcome one would expect for the return of the LORD to Jerusalem.

The motif of the LORD as king is one that gains prominence in the Psalms and prophetic books.[754] Of particular significance for Isaiah is the identification of the LORD as king in the call of Isaiah - which would suggest that this imagery is one that is of particular influence for that prophetic tradition.

> Isaiah 33:22b (LXX)
> The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our ruler;
> the Lord is our king; he will save us.

A further allusion to the Exodus can be seen in Isaiah 43:15-19 (LXX):

> [15]I am the Lord God, your Holy One,
> the one who exhibited Israel as your king.
> [16]Thus says the Lord,
> who provides a way in the sea,
> a path in the mighty water,
> [17]who has brought out chariots and horse
> and a mighty throng together;
> they have lain down and will not rise;
> they have been quenched like a wick that is quenched:
> [18]Do not remember the former things
> or consider the things of old.
> [19]Look, I am doing new things that will now spring forth,

754. Numbers 23:21 1 Samuel 12:12; 1 Chronicles 16:31; Psalms 10:16, 24:8, 10, 29:10, 47:2, 84:3, 89:18, 93:1, 3, 96:10, 97:1, 98:6, 99:1; Isaiah 6:5, 33:22, 43:15, 44:6; Jeremiah 8:19, 10:10, 46:13, 48:15, 51:57; Zephaniah 3:15; Zechariah 14:9, 16; Malachi 1:14; Tobit 10:13; 13:6, 10, 13:15; Judith 9:12; Sirach 51:1, 12; 2 Maccabees 1:24; 3 Maccabees 2:2; 3 Maccabees 5:35; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16; Esther (LXX) 13:9, 15, 14:3, 14:12; Enoch 9:4, 12:3, 25:3, 27:3.

and you will know them,
and I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the dry land.

A similar theme is present in Isaiah 44:6 (LXX):

Thus says God, the king of Israel,
who delivered him, God Sabaoth:
I am first, and I am after these things;
besides me there is no god.

Here there is also a conjunction of the LORD as King with the New Exodus theme.

Within Zechariah 14 which, as noted above, is an oft-cited background to the Triumphal Entry, the kingship of the LORD can be seen as the context against which the LORD enters Zion:

> And the Lord will become king over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one and his name one. (Zechariah 14:9 LXX)
>
> And it will be that all who remain of all the nations that came against Ierousalem shall also go up year after year to do obeisance to the King, the Lord Almighty, and to keep the feast of tent pitching. (Zechariah 14:16 LXX)

Given all of this, it is not fanciful to see the παρουσία into Jerusalem as welcoming the LORD *qua* king back to Zion. Whilst it is true that a form of the παρουσία would be appropriate to welcome a governor,[755] it is common for a King or Emperor to make such an entry. This would be the most natural conclusion to the New Exodus theme too, as the LORD returns within his people to make residence in Zion

Also, a return of the LORD to the Temple - for that is the goal of the entry - would make sense of the vision of Ezekiel where the glory of the LORD returns to the Temple from the east of Jerusalem.

755. Kinman, 1995, pp34ff.

Finally, Hooker has noted that lack of a reference to Malachi 3:1 in chapter eleven is "a source of surprise to all commentators".[756] Given the narrative approach which Mark has taken in his portrayal of Christ's nature, this need not be too large a surprise. Rather, Jesus is portrayed as acting out the return portrayed in Malachi.

d) The Entry into the Temple

Given the scheme outlined above, the entry into the Temple appears to be a "complete anticlimax".[757] However, as Camery-Hoggatt has shown, Mark is no stranger to the use of irony[758] and it would make better sense of the passage to see it as an ironic outworking of the themes in Ezekiel, Isaiah and Zechariah. Here is the return of the LORD to Zion ... and those in the Temple fail to recognise his return. The populace greet Jesus with a παρουσία, but the king in their imagination is not the same as the King who is to lead his people back in a New Exodus. There is a failure on both parts to grasp the significance of the events which unfold. "All of those signals are woven into the fabric of the narrative itself, a fabric which the characters inside the narrative cannot see".[759]

e) Figs and the Temple

So it is that the following day Jesus returns to the Temple in order to pass judgement upon it. The episode is sandwiched between the parabolic cursing of the fig tree and its withering. Whilst one would expect to find fig buds on a tree in full leaf, there was none.[760] Its appearance was deceptive of a potential fruitfulness which, on closer inspection, proved to be false. In view of Mark's use of περιβλέπω (look around, hunt for) in 11:11, it would seem that the inspection of the Temple the previous day had similarly found signs of potential fruitfulness which were false.

When Jesus reaches the unfruitful Temple, he "appropriates" it by casting out those who facilitated the round of sacrifices. In this connection, ἐκβάλλω brings to mind

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756. Hooker, 2005, p42.
757. Edwards, 2002, p337.
758. Camery-Hoggatt, 1991.
759. Camery-Hoggatt, 1991, p179.
760. Edwards, 2002, p339f.

the exorcisms previously in the Gospel which are described in similar language.[761]

f) Conclusion

The 'triumphal entry' is best understood against the contexts of its day: the well established pattern for kings or Emperors entering a city; the hope for a New Exodus and the entry of the Divine Warrior into Jerusalem. When these are acknowledged, along with the ironic portrayal of the entry of Jesus into the Temple, it can be seen that Mark is illustrating the return of the LORD to Zion. The LORD who had been seen feeding the five thousand and walking on water. The LORD whose theophanic presence was revealed to the inner core of the disciples at the transfiguration when the glorified Christ spoke with those who were similarly recipients of a theophany atop mountains.

It will be noted that Mark does not use the type-scene pattern in this instance, most probably as this is not a narrative designed to reveal divinity, but rather to portray the return of the LORD. It would therefore seem inappropriate to utilise a type-scene which is more relevant to private/small group theophanies. The narrative pattern employed on this occasion is one more suited to the return.

VI. The Role of Theophany in Mark

Watts has written at length of the influence of the Isaian New Exodus in Mark,[762] and the presence of this theme would suggest that - as in Isaiah - there is a hope for return to Zion by the LORD. Within the narrative structures of his Christology, Mark depicts Jesus as this returning LORD by showing him actualising the hope seen in Isaiah. This actualisation draws on the language of theophany, being appropriate language to use for the appearing LORD.

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761. cf 1:34, 39, 3:15, 22, 6:13, 7:26, 9:18-38.
762. Watts, 1997.

So it is that Jesus, the shepherd, feeds those who are to return from Exile. He reveals his identity in the walking on the water, an event which is closely tied in the narrative to the feeding. Later, at the beginning of the 'way' to Jerusalem there is a fuller theophanic revelation where the glorified Christ talks with those who have received similar mountain top experiences in the past. Jesus then enters Zion in the manner of a returning King and enters the Temple from the mount from which Zechariah and Ezekiel had both seen the LORD return.

Mark presents the reader with a Christological narrative of the return of the LORD to Zion - a widespread hope of Second Temple Judaism. In this portrayal it is Mark's use of the imagery of theophany which serves to underline the presence of the LORD in the person of Christ.

8
The Gospel of John

I. The Prologue

The debates surrounding the form, function and theological importance of the prologue of the fourth Gospel boil down to the fundamental question: what is the root of the ideas? This, of course, is not a new question - Augustine perceived the Platonists putting forward similar ideas to those in the prologue[763] - yet the presentation of Logos theology within these verses still causes commentators to seek for similar ideas within the various theological/philosophical outlooks of the first century. Antecedents have been offered from Greek thought (especially Stoicism), Gnosticism, the Old Testament and Hellenistic Judaism. Still others have suggested that the theology is uniquely Johannine and cautioned against looking anywhere else.[764] The range of alternatives is vast, and Painter has commented that "it must seem unlikely that anything new could be said about it with some claim to credibility".[765]

In investigating the range of alternative sources, there is a scale of probabilities which can be applied, which in turn will determine the order in which the possibilities are considered. The first to be considered will be that which most closely fits the background to the New Testament discussed above, the Judaism of the late first and early second centuries. If it can be shown that there is no linkage, or that such linkage is only tenuous, then investigations should move on elsewhere.

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763. *Conf.* VII.9.
764. Miller, 1993.
765. Painter, 1991, p109.

However, as will be seen, such movement is unnecessary. Evans is apposite: "what we have in this Gospel is a christological apologetic that is not only rooted in the Jewish Scriptures but which also presupposes Jewish assumptions and thinking".[766]

a) The Prologue and the Gospel

As can be seen from many, and often conflicting, discussions in the commentaries the assumed form of a text has a fundamental bearing in its interpretation, not least because form is a clue as to *Sitz im Leben* which in turn is a controlling factor for theological interpretation. In this case function follows form.

In considering the Prologue, it is often proposed that what we have is an extant hymn (from whatever source) which has been amended and added onto the front of the Gospel and which bears little relation to the remainder of the writing. It is not uncommon to find the Prologue to the fourth Gospel treated as some sort of addendum in the mind of the final redactor. The themes of the Prologue, so the argument goes, are not developed elsewhere and the redaction of the hymn-source is somewhat clumsy.

It is true that there is a poetic quality to the prologue, evidenced by the use of parallelism in the text (especially in the opening verses), but the question is begged: whose hymn? Bultmann, so influential here as in other places, replies "unquestionably the origin was not Jewish".[767] If this is so then one has to look elsewhere for a source and these putative sources have been pluriform. Bultmann himself looked to "the extraordinarily early impact of eastern gnostic speculations"[768] and saw parallels in the revelation-discourse of the Naassene Hymn[769]. Painter sees a "'sectarian' Jewish hymn" behind the text which had, prior to coming into the evangelist's hands, been edited by a "'Hellenist' Christian community which was

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766. Evans, 1993, p173. This is not to suggest that there is only one background to the Prologue, but to suggest that some are stronger than others. For the purpose of this investigation, the Old Testament background is not only the strongest, but the most revealing.
767. Bultmann, 1997, p40.
768. Bultmann, 1997, p43.
769. Bultmann, 1971, p14.

familiar with the Pauline identification of Christ with Wisdom and the antithesis of Law and grace".[770] Writing in 1987 Ridderbos comments that the majority of scholars who perceive a hymn see it to be an existing church hymn[771] and looking back over the twentieth century this is very much a prevailing view.[772]

Yet, the hymn theory (logos hymn or otherwise) is not without its problems. The major difficulty is that any hymnic reconstruction becomes convoluted very quickly. This is not just in the question of the source, but in the form of the hymn itself. Famously, Brown lists eight possible reconstructions of the hymns given by the scholars before rejecting them all[773] and there has been a persistent core who have rejected a hymnic reading altogether.[774]

The fundamental issue with reading of the Prologue as a hymn lies in the need to dissect the text in order to either rearrange it into a feasible order, or the need to simply throw away the phrases which undermine a particular argument. This results in a prologue somewhat divorced from the main body of the Gospel and whose literary and theological standard is rather mixed. This notion sits rather uncomfortably with what we know of the remainder of the Gospel where themes are developed and there is a deftness in theology.[775]

Given the exegetical difficulties in reading the prologue as a hymn (be it Christian, gnostic or Stoic) it would seem that there must be another solution which allows for more harmony in the text. A solution, moreover, which will reflect the context in

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770. Painter, 1991, p109.
771. Ridderbos, 1997, p18. The German original dates from 1987.
772. See the table of reconstructed hymns given in Sadananda, 2004, pp155ff.
773. Brown, 1971, pp21-23.
774. See, for example, Giblin, 1985 who writes "Exegetical studies of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel have tended to focus either on previous, theologically diversified stages of the passage or, alternatively, only on a final stage, often one with a chiastic or concentric arrangement. Both approaches suffer from the fallacy of supposing literary development which results in a single overall structure of the final composition." See also Borgen, 1969 et al.
775. Moreover, it is significant that the text has not traditionally been used as a hymn such as, say, the Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis or Benedictus (thus, Brodie, 1993, p134.)

which the prologue is composed. Better than divorcing the Prologue from its setting would be to view it as an introduction to the thought of the Gospel and as forming an interpretative matrix through which to read the Gospel.

b) The Role of the Prologue

Phillips makes the point that the beginning of any text plays a significant role in the creation of a "new reality with which [the readers] are invited to engage"[776] and thus is something of importance for both reader and author. It is here that the reader will gain a first impression of the characters who will take part in the drama which unfolds, and inevitably the actions of the players will be read in the light of what is set out in the prologue. Similarly, for the author (or redactor, authorial school etc.), the beginning of a text represents the "moment for our author to impress the reader, to win the reader over, or even ensnare the reader. The reading contract must be settled ... A readerless text is wasted, unrealized, barren".[777]

Three ways in which beginnings of Gospels function have been suggested.[778] Firstly, they provide the interpretative key by which the remainder of the text is unlocked. A beginning may contain an insight which is hidden from the players in the drama, and assists the reader in the process of moving from 'outsider' to 'insider. This Malborn calls the *Interactional Function*. Hooker, too, places emphasis on this role of a prologue.[779]

The second of Malborn's roles for a Gospel prologue is that of *intertextuality*. The relationship between Scripture and Communities has been discussed above, but for now it will do to note that this function will serve to orientate a Gospel within the scope of the pre-existing scriptural tradition. Moreover, it will show the textual tradition against which the Gospel is best interpreted. As Nielsen appositely puts it:

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776. Phillips, 2006, p2f. He appropriately enough deals with these issues in the introduction to his book, pp1-15.
777. Phillips, 2006, p4.
778. Kieffer, 1999, p51, Phillips, 2006, pp6-14. They both overtly follow Malborn, E. S. (1991) 'Ending at the Beginning: A Response', *Semeia 52*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), pp121-44
779. cf Hooker, 1997.

"no text has come into being or is ever heard as an independent unit; it is always part of a network of texts"[780]

The third function is *intratextual*. That is to say the prologue serves to set out the narrative worldview within which the characters move.

Within classical literature the prologue often plays the role of giving the audience the tools with which to understand the unfolding text.[781] Viewed in this way, it is possible to see how the prologue to John introduces themes which are then worked out in the remainder of the writing. It acts as a 'meta-text' and prefigures the ideas and issues which are tackled within the Gospel so that the readers are "in a privileged community of knowledge"[782] and can become knowing observers of the irony[783] which unfolds. Hence it is that they are more knowing than, say, Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman by the well[784]. The reader is an 'insider'.[785]

Moreover, given that the Gospel is not imagined as a self sufficient piece of writing, the prologue serves to illustrate how the background narratives it introduces are precisely those which are found within Judaism. Hence, the prologue plays the dual role of giving the reader a privileged, omniscient role as the drama unfolds as well as allowing the reader to see how these events are "according to the scriptures" and within the bounds of Judaism. Its role is in radically transforming the Judaic worldview it presupposes and introduces.

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780. Nielsen, 1999, p69.
781. Phillips, 2006, p42. He cites the examples of Euripidean tragedy, the later comedies of Aristophanes and what is known as New Comedy
782. Thatcher, 1999, p53.
783. It is worth noting the danger of being anachronistic, of reading modern ironic sensibilities back into antiquity. Nonetheless, there is a pattern of the 'initiated' reader/ observer which approximates to the modern understanding of irony.
784. Kieffer, 1999, p57.
785. For more on this, see Culpepper, 1983, Duke, 1985, Staley, 1988 who all focus on this. Thatcher, 1999 builds on the base "firmly established" by these studies. He does, however, debate quite how 'stable' the irony is. For a sustained treatment of the literary importance of the Prologue, see Phillips, 2006, chapter 3. For a critique of these views, see Dokka, 1999, pp91-99.

c) Reading the Prologue

Before embarking on a detailed consideration of the Prologue, it would be as well to give a precis of the argument to follow. By the literary means of an expansion of Genesis 1:1-5 by the textual community, the Prologue takes the themes of Torah, Word, Wisdom and Voice as seen in the interpretation of Second Temple Judaism and re-interprets them in the light of the incarnation by identifying them with the activity of the pre-incarnate Christ.

There is a radical continuity in the activity of God where revelation and creation are viewed as occurring in Christ who continues to carry out these activities whilst "tabernacled" in flesh. The appearing of the Logos is not seen as new (although the mode is), and has happened before in the theophany to Moses following the giving of the Law (Exodus 33).

This Christological reinterpretation of the Jewish scriptures results in Christ being written in to their narratives. Thus it is Jesus who, as the glory of God, appears to Moses at Sinai (Exodus 34:5-6, cf John 1:14). Indeed, no-one has seen God (John 1:18 echoing Exodus 33:20) as it was God the only Son who made him known at Sinai. In a similar vein, later in the Gospel we find Christ, as the Voice of the LORD, taking Abram outside (Genesis 15:5, cf John 8:56ff).

The role of the Prologue in relation to the Gospel is to place Christ within the existing theological landscape of its day and to allow for the Christological retelling of Israel's narratives both within the prologue and the Gospel as a whole. Rather than being a rather crudely appended and recycled hymn, the Prologue lays the foundations for what follows and provides the theological and historical rationale for the claims made by Christ. It provides the exegetical basis of the Textual Community which produces the Gospel.

Attention has been given above to the role of the Wisdom, Torah, Word and Voice within the Judaic worldview and the Prologue makes use of these themes within its discourse. In particular, the Wisdom narrative can be seen as a natural background to

the Prologue - an "old legacy"[786] - with the Logos being an additional background.

The influence of the History of Religions school upon the interpretation of the Prologue during much of the Twentieth Century led to a decline in attention paid to Wisdom theology as an integral part of the interpretive matrix for the fourth Gospel[787]. This has resulted in a somewhat impoverished reading of the Prologue and one in which this passage has become divorced from its theological context. Any action of this kind inevitably brings with it a danger of misunderstanding.

d) The Prologue's Exposition of Genesis 1:1-5

In treating the Prologue as an expansion of Genesis, the division between exposition and elaboration is best made at verse six,[788] leaving the first five verses as an reworking/elaboration of Genesis chapter one. In considering these verses, one would expect to find a substitution of terms from Genesis with other interpretative terms as well as some paraphrase.[789]

There is evidence of this technique elsewhere in the Gospel, which lends support to the probability of this technique being employed in the Prologue. Borgen has compared the Bread discourse in John 6 with Philo, and thence Palestinian exegetical techniques, and has identified a "striking similarity between the pattern discussed [John and Philo] and the pattern which S Maybaum finds to be typical to Palestinian midrash".[790] Evans has also identified John 12 as an extended midrash which uses Isaiah 52-53 to interpret the Triumphal Entry.[791] As was argued earlier, the model of textual community is one which overcomes the difficulty of applying later Midrashic techniques to the Second Temple period, but the exegetical imagination discussed above is clearly at work in these texts.

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786. Haenchen, Funk & Busse, 1984, p101.
787. Scott, 1992, p28.
788. Borgen, 1969, p291f.
789. Borgen, 1969, p289. Boyrain notes that Targumim such as these often use midrashic methods, Boyarin, 2001a, p267.
790. Borgen, 1965, p155.
791. Evans, 1993, p155.

1) The Word in the Beginning

The verbal links to the opening of Genesis are not obscure.[792] The Prologue begins by evoking the בְּרֵאשִׁית/ἐν ἀρχῇ of the first verse of that book with its opening anarthous ἐν ἀρχῇ and the repeated use of θεὸς operates in the same manner.[793]

The Palestinian Targum renders Genesis 1:1:

מלקדמין בחכמה ברא {ד}ייי שכלל ית שמיא וית ארעא

("From the beginning with wisdom the memra of the Lord created and perfected the heavens and the earth." - Neofiti 1.). This in itself is not surprising as both Proverbs 8:30 and Wisdom 9:9 suggest Wisdom being with God. What has caused more difficulty is the Logos fulfilling this role.

Within the Prologue the Logos replaces and interprets the וַיֹּאמֶר in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:3, which is very similar to Targum Neofiti which translates that verse:

> Then the Word [Memra] of the Lord said, "Let there be light," and there was light, according to the decree of his Word [Memra].

It is a common technique to comment on a passage from the Pentateuch by way of an intertext, not least from Psalms, Song of Songs or Wisdom. This is precisely what we have here, with Proverbs 8:22-31 being used to explicate Genesis 1:3.[794] The Logos is the subject, since the Genesis text is the controlling passage, but the Sophia material is used to put flesh on the bones.[795] This is not a new phenomonen, for we find within the writings of Philo the Logos and Sophia being equated.[796] In the Odes of Solomon, the Word "accompanies God at creation and indwells all humankind".[797] One might even go further and suggest that the incarnation at John 1:14 has some

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792. In 1997 Kurz commented on the "well known" reinterpretation of Genesis in the Prologue, making mention of Borgen, Tobin and Evans.. Kurz, 1997, p179.
793. Borgen, 1969, p289.
794. Boyarin, 2001a, pp268ff, Barrett, 1978, p151.
795. A list of Logos/Wisdom similarities is given in Borgen, 1996, p107f.
796. Denzey, 2001, p27-28. Boyarin, 2001a, p269.
797. Denzey, 2001. Here she draws upon Jack T. Sanders, "Nag Hammadi, Odes of Solomon, and New Testament Christological Hymns," in Gnosticism and the Early Christian World: In Honor of James Robinson, eds. James E. Goehring el al., 51-66.

foreshadowing in Baruch 3:37: “Afterward she appeared on earth and lived with humankind”.

The use of Proverbs 8:22ff itself as an intertext is not an innovation of the Prologue. Both the Fragmentary Targum and Neofiti show similar traits in their translation of Genesis 1:1 as is seen above[798] The link between the two texts is further strengthened by the fact that there was a textual variant of Proverbs 8:22 known to Jerome which read rē'šît darkô as bĕrē'šît darkô.[799] In fact, the Targum Neofiti also uses *memra* within the verse such that it is the Word of the Lord which creates.[800]

Evans has noted similarities between the Memra within the Targumim and the enfleshed word of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel:[801]

1. The *memra* was in the beginning (Jn 1.1a; *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1.1).
2. The *memra* was with God (Jn 1.1b; *Tg Onq. Gen. 20.3*).
3. The *memra* was God (Jn 1.1c; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut. 32.39 and *Tg. Neof.* Gen. 1.26-27; *Tg.* Isa 44.24).
4. Everything came into being through the *memra* (Jn 1.3; *Frag.Tg.* Exod 3.14).
5. In the *memra* was life (Jn 1.4; *Tg Ps.-J.* Gen. 3.24).
6. The *memra* gave light to the world (Jn 1.4b-5; *Tg. Neof.* Gen 1.3; *Tg. Neof.* Exod. 12.42; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen. 1.3).
7. The *memra* ‘tabernacled’ among humankind (Jn 1.14a; *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod.* 29.42b-45*; Tg. Ezek.* 43.7b-9; *Tg.* Zech. 2.5(9)).
8. The *memra’s* glory was seen (Jn 1.14b; *Tg. Isa.* 6.1,5).
9. The *memra* is full of grace and truth (Jn 1.14c, 16, 17; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 29.42b-45; 34.5-6; *Tg. Isa.* 48.1; 51.1; *Tg. Jer.* 42.5).
10. The Baptist bears witness to the *memra* (Jn 1.15a; see *Tg. Jer.* 42.5) and to the fact that he (the *memra*) *preceded* him, not followed him (Jn 1.15b; *Tg. Neof.* Gen. 1.1).
11. Although one cannot see God, one can see the incarnate Word (Jn 1.14, 18; *Tg. Isa.* 6.1, 5; cf. Jn 12.41 and *Tg. Onq.* Exod 33.20).[802]

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798. Anderson, 1990, pp23ff.
799. Anderson, 1990, p24. The transliteration is his.
800. Anderson, 1990, pp27-28.
801. For more parallels see Evans, 1993, p114f.
802. Evans, 1993, pp121ff. The list is lightly edited, but otherwise is Evans’.

It is also worth noting that there is one instance of a blurring of the roles of the Word and Wisdom in Sirach 24:3 where Wisdom says: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist"[803] and there is identification of Word and Wisdom within the intertestamental literature.[804]

This is ultimately a far more satisfying reading of these verses than the one which assumes that Logos has been substituted for Sophia merely on the grounds of grammatical accuracy, so that we do not have a female character being equated with Christ.[805] It should also be noted that there is no evidence for any gnostic or proto-gnostic system of syzergies involving male/female poles existing by the end of the first century which would obviate any need for John to deal with this as did, say, Irenaeus at a later date.[806] Moreover, Paul did not blush at calling Jesus the 'wisdom of God' (1 Corinthians 1:24; cf 1:30).[807] More likely is the problem that Wisdom is the first *created*, and is not the eternal.[808]

All of this is to say that there is a tradition of the personification of Wisdom[809] within late-Biblical/Intertestamental writings which would also be an appropriate background to the Prologue. It is not being argued here that Neofiti should be taken as a background to John (as, say, Boyarin does),[810] but rather that it bears witness to a development of the Wisdom tradition which is already extant. What occurs here is a synthesis between the Logos and Wisdom. The influence of Wisdom upon the opening of the Prologue is clear, as is the role in the Gospel as a whole.[811]

Ridderbos has objected that "the 'in the beginning' of Jn 1:1ff transcends by far that

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803. Pollard, 1970, p9, n4. See also Ashton, 1991, p527f. Ashton gives this verse far more weight than Pollard.
804. Beasley-Murray, 1999, p8, citing Wisdom 9:1.
805. As is suggested by, *inter alia*, Brown, 1971, p523.
806. Pollard, 1970, p9.
807. Edwards, 2003, p89.
808. Lincoln, 2005, p97.
809. Murphy, 1967, pp109-112.
810. Boyarin, 2001a.
811. Brown, 1971, ppCXXII - CXXV.

of Gn 1:1ff and cannot be explained on the basis of Genesis 1".[812] In reply, it should be said that whilst it is true that Genesis begins with creation that does not imply that the characters of the narrative begin there too. What is being evoked here is the wider set of traditions surrounding the Word/Memra and Wisdom who have a role within creation. Where Genesis and John both begin is with the dealing of God/ Logos with humankind.

2) Excursus: The Four Nights

The Targum on Genesis 1:1ff does not provide the only background for the Prologue. As McNamara has noted, there are strong parallels in the creation account to be found in the Palestinian Targum (Neofiti) at Exodus 12:42.[813] The passage begins:

> Indeed there are four nights which were written in the Chronicles. The first night: When the Lord was revealed over the world to create it. The world was formless and void, and darkness was spreading over the face of the deep, and the Word of the Lord was light and shone. So he called it the first night.

The activity of the first night contains themes to be found in the Prologue, in particular the motif of light and darkness being tied to creation. McNamara wonders, given the Palestinian provenance of the text, whether the author of the Prologue was conversant with the passage.[814] Given the fact that the text is part of the Passover narrative, one would assume it was well known within the synagogue. Furthermore, the text makes reference to the 'Chronicles', which would suggest that the four nights tradition was well established by the time of the compilation of Neofiti. It is therefore not over-speculative to assume some foreknowledge of this tradition.[815]

The connection of this passage with Passover is suggestive given the role of passover within the Gospel as a whole. The nearness of the passover operates as a thread throughout:

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812. Ridderbos, 1997, p25 (see also p24).
813. McNamara, 1968. He notes that scholars have yet to settle on a date for Neofiti, but it would appear to be a faithful transmission of an earlier tradition.
814. McNamara, 1968, p116.
815. Especially given, as Blomberg notes, the general acceptance amongst scholars that the author was from Palestine. Blomberg, 2001, p27.

John 2:13 Καὶ ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων: the Passover of the Jews was near

John 6:4 ἦν δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα, ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων: Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near.

John 11:55 Ην δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων: Now the Passover of the Jews was near

Moreover, the prologue is closely followed by the exchange between Jesus and John wherein Jesus is called "ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ" (the Lamb of God), a theme which finally culminates in the crucifixion during the passover period. Without wishing to make too much of this connection, the interplay of the memra, darkness, light and passover is an intriguing one.

3) Overcoming

The theme of light and darkness is a key one in the first day of Genesis and is present within the Prologue as:

> ὃ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

There is an issue of translation here, which turns on the appropriate rendering of κατέλαβεν. A sense of the range of possibilities can be seen from the way in which it is treated in some modern translations:

NRSV: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

NIV: The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

ESV: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

GNB: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

Support for translating κατέλαβεν as "overcome" comes from the usage of the verb in John 12:35,[816] but this would depart from the sense of either Genesis 1:1ff or the Wisdom traditions where such a conflict is not in view. Tobin squares this circle by discerning antecedents within Philo's writings, but does admit that the parallels are

816. Tobin, 1990, p262.

not close.[817] He also looks for the linkage of the Logos with life in Philo, but again admits to only a similarity.[818]

Better, here, is to take seriously the Wisdom background and follow that particular trail.[819] Dyer has suggested that the better translation is "The light still shines in the darkness, even though the darkness has never appreciated it".[820] This is somewhat closer to the first of the meanings given by BDAG: "to make someth. one's own, win, attain"[821] and would suggest a sense of accepting or comprehending.[822]

Boyarin makes note of "the narrative of Wisdom's entry into the world and her failure to find a home there",[823] and it is likely that this is what is in view here, as will be seen from the expansion below. Furthermore, there are parallels with Enoch 42:

> [1]Wisdom found no place where she might dwell;
> Then a dwelling-place was assigned her in the heavens.
> [2]Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men,
> And found no dwelling-place: Wisdom returned to her place,
> And took her seat among the angels.

There is also light imagery surrounding the Torah which provides light for all (*TLevi* 14:4, cf also Proverbs 6:23 and Psalms 119:105), and has a history that stretches back to the 'beginning'.[824] Moreover there is a tradition that has everything being created through the Torah.[825] The identification of the Torah with Wisdom and Logos gives a potent background and renders unnecessary the chronological gymnastics necessitated by reading these verses as referring to the post-incarnate Logos.

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817. Tobin, 1990, pp262-263.
818. Tobin, 1990, pp264-265.
819. cf Dodd, 1953, pp273-275.
820. Dyer, 1960. See also Stibbe, 1994, p13.
821. This meaning is suggested for this verse in BDAG. Lincoln argues for a meaning of 'master, overcome' on the basis of the usage at 12:35 (Lincoln, 2005, p99). This is an unnecessary limiting of the semantic field and robs the language of the Gospel of subtlety. Beasley-Murray, 1999, p11 prefers to suggest that "acknowledging and receiving the truth of the revelation is primarily in view here".
822. Cf BDAG which makes this semantic link.
823. Boyarin, 2001a, p274.
824. Barrett, 1978, p151. He cites Gen R. 1.2 and Pesahim 54a.
825. Barrett, 1978, p156. He cites *P. Aboth* 3.15 and 1 QS 11.11.

A wisdom background would also make sense of the life spoken of in the Prologue, which would then refer to the life-giving Wisdom. This is of a piece with the Wisdom tradition as can be seen from the following:[826]

> Wisdom is a fountain of life to one who has it, but folly is the punishment of fools. (Proverbs 16:22)
>
> For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to the one who possesses it. (Ecclesiastes 7:12)
>
> Learn where there is wisdom,
> where there is strength,
> where there is understanding,
> so that you may at the same time discern
> where there is length of days, and life,
> where there is light for the eyes, and peace. (Baruch 3:14)
>
> Now reason is the mind that with sound logic prefers the life of wisdom. (4Maccabees 1:15)
>
> Then he will give light and grace to the elect, and they will inherit the earth. Then wisdom will be given to all the elect, and all these will live. (Enoch 3:8)

Rather than a rather hamfisted intrusion into the text by a redactor, it would seem that this is a more likely background to this portion of the Prologue, as it is with the beginning portions.

4) Conclusion: John and Genesis

In light of the above, a structure for the opening of the Prologue can be offered:

Genesis	John
In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

826. One might even add 1 Corinthians 1:30: He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Genesis	John
And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.	The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

What we have, then, is a treatment of the opening of Genesis. What follows on from verse 6 is an expansion of this basic interpretation.

e) The Prologue's Expansion

The remainder of the Prologue expands upon the themes found within the first five verses, notably the light shining in the darkness, and begins with reference to John which serves to prepare the way for the incarnation of the Logos in creation.[827] This is chronologically consistent with the prologue, and the next verses (ten to thirteen) serve as an excursus on the coming light.

1) The Wandering Wisdom of God (vv10-13)

These verses, drawing upon the wisdom tradition, speak of the pre-incarnation activity of the Logos.[828] This is to assert that the "children of God" spoken of here are to be found prior to the incarnation, and not to those who respond to the preaching of Jesus. The notion of some becoming 'sons of God' by means other than lineage is not unknown within Judaism.[829] Philo speaks of those whose spirituality or morality give rise to this designation,[830] and within Rabbinic literature there is a debate between those who argued that Israel were the children of God and those who claimed that only those who followed God's will could be so-called.[831] This reading overcomes the chronological problems that have bedeviled other interpretations of the prologue, especially as a hymn, which have resulted in it being "notoriously difficult, if not impossible"[832] to pinpoint the moment of incarnation.[833] Rather than

827. Borgen, 1969, p292. Contra, e.g., Lincoln, 2005, p101f.
828. Contra, e.g., Brown, 1971, pp29ff.
829. Culpepper, 1980, pp19-24 are useful here.
830. For examples, see Culpepper, 1980, p21.
831. Culpepper, 1980, p22.
832. Pollard, 1970, p13.
833. Edwards, 2003, p86 gives some sense of the confusion felt by many here.

attempting to read verses ten to thirteen as dealing with the incarnation we have here the pre-incarnate activity of the Logos, widespread rejection of which results in the incarnation at verse 14. However, there were those who embraced the Logos and so received "power to become children of God".

By the time of the the Prologue, Wisdom was being identified with the Torah[834] and, as has been seen, there is a tradition that Wisdom did not find a home amongst her people[835] (cf Enoch quoted above). It has been suggested that passages such as this constitute a parody on traditions such as Sirach 24 whereby Wisdom finds a home in the Torah.[836] If that is the case then it is plausible that what is being asserted in the Prologue is that the wandering Logos did not find a home anywhere *not even amongst those with the Torah* so that another Sinai event must take place.[837] The final word of the prologue suggests that it is only the incarnated Word which truly 'exegetes' the Father[838] and that all other attempts are incomplete at best.

Dodd gives an alternative which is not wholly dissimilar and draws upon the Word of the LORD (דְּבַר־יְהוָה) as given through the prophets. Thus the word is rejected by those who reject the prophets' message.[839] Yet, he also notes that the דְּבַר־יְהוָה is often interchangeable with תּוֹרָת (Torah)[840] which would further enhance the notion of the pre-incarnate Logos being amongst the people of God in the Torah and would give a background to the imagery of light and darkness. The Prologue makes a number of identifications between the Logos and the Torah (light, life, grace, truth)

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834. Edwards, 2003, p89. She cites Ecclus 24:23 an Baruch 4:1. See also Lincoln, 2005, p96. Boyarin, 2001a, p277, n134 notes that some Wisdom hymns deny the link. Even so the link was known, even if denied. Segal notes that there is an identification between the two in Rabbinic communities (Segal, 1977, p186)
835. cf also Lincoln, 2005, p96, Beasley-Murray, 1999, pp8-9.
836. Boyarin, 2001a, p277. Here he cites Sharon H. Ringe, Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1999).
837. Ashton calls this a "hymn about revelation" (Ashton, 1991, p528) but does not develop the theme in the direction taken here. See also Pollard, 1970, pp32ff.
838. Ashton, 1991, pp528-529. Ashton sees the exegesis as being the following Gospel, but it would be better to see this in the context of the contrast of Torah and Logos as developed in the prologue itself.
839. Dodd, 1953, p272.
840. Dodd, 1953, p269. He cites Isaiah 2:3 (=Micah 4:2).

and there was a tradition of the Torah's pre-existence.[841] This prepares the way for the identification of Jesus with the Torah in verse seventeen.[842]

2) The Tabernacling Word (vv14-18)

Here, then, is the startling moment in the Prologue. It is not the idea of the Logos being involved in creation, or even coming to some and being rejected by others. It is the Word taking flesh that marks a strong divergence from Judaic thought. Not only did the Word take flesh but also "lived among us".

The tabernacling imagery is redolent of imagery of the LORD dwelling with his people[843] where κατασκηνοω is employed, as can be illustrated by a selection of references (all LXX):

> Numbers 35:34
>
> And you shall not defile the land that you live upon, on which *I will encamp among you*, for I am the Lord, *encamping in the midst* of the sons of Israel. "
>
> Joshua 22:19
>
> And now if the land of your possession is small, cross over to the land of the possession of the Lord, there *where the tent of the Lord encamps*, and take your inheritance among us, but do not become rebels from God, and do not rebel from the Lord by your building an altar other than the altar of the Lord our God.
>
> 1Chronicles 23:25
>
> because David said, "The Lord God of Israel has given his people repose *and has made his abode in Ierousalem* forever."
>
> 1Esdras 2:5
>
> If anyone of you, therefore, is of his nation, let his Lord be with him, and when they have gone up to Ierousalem, which is in Judea, let him build the house of the Lord of Israel. *This is the Lord who encamps in Ierousalem*.
>
> Ezra 6:12
>
> And may the God *whose name encamps there* overthrow any king and people that shall put forth its hand to alter or to destroy that house of God which is in Ierousalem. I, Darius, have issued a decision; it shall be done with all diligence."

841. cf Lincoln, 2005, p77.
842. Lincoln, 2005, p96.
843. Waetjen, 2001, p279.

Ezra 7:15

and that you inspect the silver and gold for the house of the Lord that the king and counselors freely offered to *the God of Israel who encamps in Ierousalem*

Nehemiah 1:9

and if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, if your dispersion is to the farthest skies, from there I will gather them and lead them to the place where *I have chosen my name to encamp there.*'

Zechariah 2:10-11

Rejoice, and be glad, O daughter Sion. *For behold, I am coming and will tent in your midst*, says the Lord. And many nations shall flee to the Lord for refuge on that day and shall become a people to him, and they will tent in your midst. And you shall recognize that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.

Zechariah 8:3

This is what the Lord says: And I will return to Sion, and *I will tent in the midst of Ierousalem*, and Ierousalem shall be called a city that is true, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty, a holy mountain.

Ezekiel 43:7

And he said to me, "You have seen, son of man, the place of my throne and the place of the print of my feet, *in which my name shall encamp in the midst of the house of Israel* forever, and the house of Israel shall no more desecrate my holy name, they and their leaders, by their whoring and by the murders of the leaders in their midst...

As the etymology of κατασκηνοω would suggest, this dwelling is identified with the tabernacle and, later, temple.

The preceding section of the Prologue evokes the tale of "Wisdom's misfortune in the world"[844] and of the non-reception of the Word in the form of the Torah[845]. Here we have the remarkable solution to this problem: the incarnating of the Logos in language strikingly reminiscent of the giving of the Torah at Sinai. The enfleshed Logos 'tabernacled' (ἐσκηνωσεν) amongst us, a phrase with a double referent since it also evokes the *shekinah*. Both these themes come together in Exodus 25:8-9

844. Boyarin, 2001a, p279.
845. Boyarin, 2001a, p280.

where Israel is instructed to build the Tabernacle as a dwelling place for God's presence and there is a hope for a renewed 'tenting' in passages such as Joel 3:17 and Zechariah 2:10.[846] As well as evocations of the Tabernacle there is the explicit mention of glory which, when coupled with the tabernacle, is an allusion to the Sinai event in Exodus 24:16f.

We might also find here allusions to Baruch 3:35-37:

> [35]This is our God;
> no other can be compared to him.
> [36]He found the whole way to knowledge,
> and gave her [Wisdom] to his servant Jacob
> and to Israel, whom he loved.
> [37]Afterward she appeared on earth
> and lived with humankind.

However, another event is also in view. The combination χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (grace and truth) recall the phrase 'steadfast love and faithfulness' as applied to God. Whilst the phrase is not identical, it is a fair translation of the Hebrew.[847] However, the Targum Neofiti at 33:6 is notable:

> And the glory of the shekhinah of the Lord passed over, and Moses prayed and said, "Lord, Lord, God, Gracious One and Merciful One, patient and removed from anger, and near to mercy, and abundantly doing *kindness and truth*

In this translation we have a coming together of the shekinah, glory, grace (טָבוּן) and truth and we have not only a reference to the Tabernacle as a place of God's presence but, importantly, to the theophany *par excellence* of the whole Sinai event.[848] The testimony of Jesus' older cousin serves to underline the point: "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me".

The notion of a second Sinai is in mind in verse sixteen too. Towards the end of this

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846. Brown, 1971, p32. This role is also associated with Wisdom in 24:8-11.
847. Lincoln, 2005, p105f. For Lincoln they 'almost certainly' evoke this. See also Brown, 1971, p14 and Hanson, 1977. Tsutserov has recently suggested that John has his himself translated this phrase from the Hebrew account of the Sinai theophany at Exodus 34:6, which he suggests accounts for the discrepancy of language. Tsutserov, 2009, esp Chapter 1.
848. For more on the Gospel and Exodus see Enz, 1957.

verse, most modern translations follow the sense 'grace upon grace', but this is not the best translation of "χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος" where there is a strong sense of replacement.[849] Whilst the use of 'upon' is often defended by reference to Philo,[850] the force of that passage is one of "continually substituting new blessings for those of older date".[851] There really is no reason not to translate the phrase as "grace in place of grace". Blumenthal has undertaken an extensive survey of the phrase in a wide range of Greek texts in antiquity (including Septuagintal ones) and has concluded that the phrase is best understood as being a compensatory exchange ("Die Formulierung χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος wäre dann im Sinne einer als Austausch konzipierten Kompensation zu verstehen...").[852]

Here, again, there is a sense of a new Sinai[853] with the Prologue portraying the grace of Christ as superseding/replacing the grace of the Sinai covenant.[854] "The law is not so much criticized as subordinated".[855]

The notion of the Law being superseded is not something unknown to Judaism. Pilgaard, following Brooke, has argued that the Temple Scroll contains a similar understanding with regard to the Law and the covenant with Jacob, as may be seen in 11QT9:8-10:[856]

> I will dwell with them for ever and ever and will sanctify my [s]anctuary by my glory. I will cause my glory to rest on it until the day of creation on which I shall create my sanctuary, establishing it for myself for all time according to the covenant which I have made with Jacob in Bethel

Within the Prologue, Pilgaard's (and Brooke's) argument is that the replacement in mind derives from the glory that was reflected in Moses' face as he descended the

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849. BDAG. See Edwards, 1988 where she argues for a translation of "instead of" or "in place of".
850. *On the Posterity of Cain and Abel*, 145. See Lincoln, 2005, p107 where he makes mention of this argument.
851. *On the Posterity of Cain and Abel*, 145
852. Blumenthal, 2001, p294.
853. cf also Evans, 1993, p135f.
854. Evans, 1993, p80.
855. Wilson, 1995, p76.
856. Pilgaard, 1999, p133. He is drawing upon Brooke, 1989.

mount. In Christ the "Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have *seen his glory*". Hence it is that the reflected glory seen in Moses is replaced by "the glory as of a father's only son" which supersedes the glory of Moses as it is "full of grace and truth", echoing the words of the LORD as the theophany passed by Moses. So it is that "from his fullness we have all received, grace *in place of* grace".

This theme is then all the more explicit in verse seventeen: "Because the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ". It is at this point that first mention is made of Jesus by name in the prologue. This sentence troubles some since it appears to deny that the Mosaic covenant contained grace and truth.[857] This, though, is to miss the force of the prologue as a whole for what is being asserted is not that grace and truth were absent, but rather that their presence was connected to the presence of the Logos. In other words the law is *only* law if it is not accompanied by Wisdom. Grace and truth are to be found in the law precisely when Wisdom is received. The tragedy is, according to the Prologue, that "he came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him". Moreover, the light shone but the darkness did not accept it. Thus the Logos became incarnate as Jesus Christ. The Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth *came into being* (ἐγένετο) through Wisdom or Logos, which John has identified with Christ.

There is some variance over the translation of verse eighteen as the textual witnesses vary. Some have μονογενὴς θεός, others μονογενὴς υιός and still others simply μονογενής. In the view of the United Bible Society's committee the best attested is the first,[858] with both $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ and $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ having this reading. The last option has little attestation. As to the μονογενὴς υιός it would seem likely that this is a scribal emendation influenced by 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9,[859] though one which gained favour in the versions and later Greek witnesses as well as Chrysostom, Athanasius and the Latin fathers.[860] However, one tends to allow the easier readings to yield to

857. e.g. Lincoln, 2005, 108.
858. Metzger, 1994, p169f.
859. Metzger, 1994, p169f.
860. Brown, 1971, p17.

the more difficult[861] and the better attested μονογενὴς θεός should be allowed to stand.[862]

This results in the final verse being: "No-one has ever seen God; the only God who is in the Father's bosom, he has made him known" which in turn acts as an inclusio with the first verse.[863] The prologue therefore finishes with another allusion to Exodus 33: "No one has ever seen God"[864] and the implication it is not the Father whom Moses sees atop Sinai, but rather the Logos who is the light and glory of God,[865] the Logos who "came to what was his own" through whom came "grace and truth", the Logos who was in the beginning with God, who was God. The climax of the prologue comes with the realisation that the 'en-fleshed' figure is the the one who reveals the Father and makes him known. He is the visible form of the Father revealed at Sinai, and thus Christ is at the heart of the Jewish narrative.

f) The Prologue's Narrative

The reading of the Prologue in light of Genesis 1 rather than a (heavily edited) hymn has a number of benefits. Firstly, it allows for a close relationship between the Gospel and the Second Temple background of the first century. It allows for a relationship between Judaism and Christianity which is increasingly being viewed as an important background to the thought of early Christianity. There is a sensitivity to the development of Judaism(s) in this period, without the mistake of anachronistically reading back Rabbinic Judaism which tended to narrow the scope of Second Temple Judaism.

Secondly, it results in a prologue which not only coheres, but is clearly of a piece with the Gospel as a whole, as will be seen below as the themes of the prologue are encountered elsewhere in the Gospel. There is a clear narrative and chronology which is of a piece with Jewish writings, until the incarnation of verse fourteen.

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861. Beasley-Murray, 1999, p2f.
862. On this, see also Mastin, 1975 and Fennema, 1985.
863. Schnackenburg, 1968, p280. he has a helpful discussion of the alternatives.
864. Evans, 1993, p80.
865. cf Hanson, 1977, pp95ff.

There may be arguments as to the extent of any hypostasization of Jewish figures such as Word or Wisdom, but these do not affect the narrative.

The prologue is best viewed as the work of a Textual Community in re-imagining, or re-applying, the opening of Genesis using Proverbs 8 as an intertext. Verses six to eighteen are an expansion on the opening five verses and explicate them. This produces the following structure:-

1) The Text

The Prologue begins with a strong verbal link to Genesis 1:1 and uses the common motif of the Word of God as the creative force as is found within the Targumim. There is an identification of the Word with God, again a commonplace. The creating role of the Word is defined by means of the Wisdom material which had already begun to to be identified with the Word. There is also an evocation of the Torah (the light) and the theme of non-reception is adumbrated.

There is a drawing upon of multiple interlinked themes: Word, Wisdom and Torah. These have coalesced into the single figure of the Logos, which "leads one to suspect that Christianity was the first to synthesize the various divine agents at creation by identifying them all with the Christian Messiah"[866]. This figure creates and enters creation but, as with the Wisdom writings, does not find a home.

2) The Expansion

John is then introduced at the beginning of the expansion. He is sent as a result of the failure of the Logos to find a home in the world, a failure which is described in greater detail in verses ten to thirteen. He is a herald of this divine light, "a representative of the hermeneutical performance of the Logos".[867]

These verses speak of the pre-incarnate activity of the Logos. The Logos comes into his creation but is not known, even when he encounters his own people. Some people, however, do receive him and these become children of God (in mind here are

866. Segal, 1977, p190. Cf also p208ff
867. Waetjen, 2001, p273.

appearances to such as Abram). As a result of this, the Logos takes flesh and in a second Sinai event tabernacles once more with his people. This is the figure that John bears witness to, the one who gave a second grace in place of the Law given through Moses, for the Torah in itself cannot make God known, only God can make himself known.

This reading, as well as drawing upon Word/Wisdom/Torah imagery,[868] provides a re-interpretive framework for the theophanies of the Old Testament.

g) The Prologue and Theophany

Within the Prologue, the Logos is active within his creation before the incarnation. As well as the rather general statements concerning the Logos in verses ten to thirteen there is the strong identification of the Logos with the Sinai theophany in verses fourteen to eighteen.

There is also a strong linkage made between the incarnating Logos and the Sinai event, such that the Logos is the one who is revealed to Moses in glory. Certainly glory is a theme which goes on to develop throughout this Gospel.

Given this, one can conclude that the Gospel author is happy to equate the pre-incarnate Logos with the Old Testament theophanies. Whereas Jewish tradition made use of circumlocutions in these instances, in the Prologue these become reified as the Logos. There is a possibility that this had already happened by means of the Memra of the Targumim, but even if this is not the case then this is a development that is made from what was common currency. The personifications of Torah, Wisdom and Logos/Memra find their embodiment in Christ.

It is clear, then, that the Prologue makes use of Old Testament theophany to speak of

868. Dunn has commented that there is nothing - until the incarnation - within the prologue which would surprise a late Second Temple Jew familiar with the Wisdom tradition (Dunn, 1989, p241). Waetjen would seek to finesse this statement since: "the prologue's disclosure of the dynamic relationship of union and differentiation between God the Creator and the Logos is unparalleled". Waetjen, 2001, p277.

the incarnate Christ. Since Jesus is the Logos and the Logos is also the theophany we might even speak of Christophanies or, at least, Logophanies. Hence we might observe that Justin's Dialogue and the Prologue are not so far apart.

II. The Gospel in the Light of the Prologue

The Prologue provides the theological rationale for the discernment of Christ within the pages of the Jewish scriptures. The incarnation is portrayed as the enfleshing of the Logos which had acted within the history of Israel, and had taken the form of Wisdom and Torah. The identification of Christ with the Sinai theophany event in particular serves to place Jesus within the very fabric of the self-understanding of Judaism, and permits a thoroughly Christological interpretation of the Old Testament.

This interpretation is not solely in the realm of abstract ideas but is a reworking of the Jewish Scriptures themselves. Thus the Prologue is not to be viewed as setting the scene for the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and hope, but rather as seeking to show how Christ, as Word/Wisdom/Torah and ultimately theophany, has been active within the history of Judaism all along.

This theme of theophany is developed in the Gospel as a whole and forms an important part of Jesus' dialogue with the Jews.

a) Receiving the Word: John 5:37-38

> And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.

Barrett is one who finds this passage perplexing: "It is not clear to what witness John refers at this point".[869] Christ cannot be referring to the Scriptures, he reasons, which are not mentioned explicitly until verse 39. Nor is there any real likelihood that what

869. Barrett, 1978, p266f.

is in mind is the baptism narrative in Mark and parallels. Barrett's solution is to cross reference the passage with 1 John 5:9f and concludes that "what John means is that the truth of God in Jesus is self-authenticating in the experience of the believer; but no such convenient phrase lay to his hand".[870] In coming to this conclusion he suggests that the reference to hearing his voice could refer to 12:29 and seeing his form refers to 1:18.

However, this solution requires a lot of the text. The passage as a whole deals with concrete examples (John the Baptist, the scriptures, Moses) and not the sort of existential self-authentication proposed by Barrett. Moreover, such a theme cannot be witnessed in the Gospel as a whole.

The wider setting of the passage is that of the Law. At the beginning of the chapter a man has been healed on the sabbath, which has led to a dispute with "the Jews", who then accuse Jesus of equating himself with God (5:18). Lincoln describes the next section (vv19-47) as a "defence in an interrogation or trial", especially in light of the forensic language employed.[871] In vv19-30 Jesus identifies himself as the judge - thus by extension, the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι cannot claim to judge him - who judges justly and, ultimately, eschatologically.

In the second section, within which our passage occurs, the discourse moves on to testimony. It is not appropriate for Jesus to give testimony about himself, but testimony has been given by John the Baptist and by the very works Jesus does (given to him by the Father to complete). These works, it is implied, are a self-evident witness to Jesus' claims regardless of the failure of his opponents to recognize this.[872] This theme of failing to recognize the testimony of God is a recurring theme in this passage.

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870. Barrett, 1978, p267.
871. Lincoln, 2005, p202. Ridderboss makes comment on the theme of "witness" in the passage, Ridderbos, 1997, p202, and notes that Jesus is answering a "case".
872. Ridderbos, 1997, p203.

The Father has himself testified, as Jesus goes on to relate by using the text quoted above with its conjunction of voice, form and word. Again, there has been a failure to recognize, which has resulted in a misuse of the revelation. The perfect tense employed, μεμαρτυρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ, would suggest that this witness is not solely in the works that Christ employed, but also prior to the incarnation[873] which would reflect the narrative set out in the prologue.

As has been discussed above, the Voice of God has as an important locus in the theophany at Sinai and the conjunction between form and voice is evocative of Deuteronomy 4:12 (LXX):

> And the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words but you did not notice a likeness, only a voice.

In countering this view, Ridderbos makes the following observations:[874]

i) the voice is heard in Deuteronomy, unlike in John 5;

ii) "in vs. 38 God's word is referred to as something they *had* received";

iii) seeing and hearing refers to that which Christ alone does as a result of his especial relation to God.

In response, the polemic that is being employed is that a genuine hearing is not taking place. A critical intertextuality which serves to undermine the self-understanding of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is not out of place here. As to the second point, it would appear that v38 relates precisely the opposite - "you do not have his word abiding in you". Ridderbos suggests that this "implies both that the word of God had nevertheless come to them ... and that it had done them no good".[875] That may well be the case, but to say that the voice (which proclaimed the word) was not heard would be to suggest the same thing. The voice proclaimed the Law, but was not heard, in the same way that Jesus proclaimed his teaching, but was not heard.

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873. The possibility is mooted in Ridderbos, 1997, p203.
874. Ridderbos, 1997, p204
875. Ridderbos, 1997, p204.

As to the third observation, this is a feasible reading but one which would not be the most likely and requires some exegetical finesse.

Blomberg has suggested that the voice being referred to is to be found at Jesus' baptism and, as such, "provides another example of 'interlocking' with the Synoptics".[876] Although it would be foolish to dismiss a knowledge of the synoptics within the Johannine circle, it would seem unlikely that a key element in an argument as important as this one (concerning Christ's authority) would build on an event missing from the Gospel.

Given the immediate context of a defence of his healing on the sabbath, Jesus can be seen to be employing language which goes to the heart of the giving of the Law. Although, he argues, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι may have received the Law as contained in the scriptures they have not received the Law itself: "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (5:39-40). The scriptures have the word, but in their searching οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι do not hear the voice: "you have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you" which, in turn, calls to mind John 1:10-11:

> [10]He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. [11]He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

The clear implication is that the Law is something that has to be received and that the condemnation that Jesus receives for healing on the sabbath shows that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι have not received the Law. Whereas those at Sinai did not see the form, but did hear the voice, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι neither saw the form nor heard the voice. If Christ is to be identified with the Voice, then the rejection of him by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι serves to underline the verdict.

A consideration of the language of the passage, however, reveals an unusual phrasing. The Greek text of Deuteronomy 4:12 has καὶ ὁμοίωμα οὐκ εἴδετε ἀλλ᾽ ἢ

876. Blomberg, 2001, p116.

φωνήν (‘but you did not notice a likeness, only a voice’) yet John 5:37 ends with: οὔτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ πώποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἑωράκατε (‘You have never heard his voice or seen his form’).

The word “εἶδος” is a curious one. Within the Gospels it only appears elsewhere in Luke, and there in two places: at Christ’s baptism, “the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily *form* like a dove” (Luke 3:22), and during the Transfiguration, “while he was praying, the *appearance* of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white”. Extending a search to encompass the entire New Testament, then the word can also be found in two places within the Pauline literature: 2 Corinthians 5:7 (“for we walk by faith, not by sight.”); and 1 Thessalonians 5:22 (“abstain from every form of evil”). Of these pairings, the two in Luke are clearly more helpful, and comment on these verses will come later.

Within the Greek Old Testament the term appears in forty-nine verses, three of which are relevant to this passage in John, and will be taken in turn.

> Genesis 32:31-32
>
> [31]And Iakob called the name of that place The-visible-form-of-God (Εἶδος θεου), “For I have seen a god face to face (εἶδον γὰρ θεὸν πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον), and my life has been preserved.” [32]And the sun rose upon him when he passed by The-visible-form-of-God (τὸ Εἶδος τοῦ θεοῦ); now he was limping upon his thigh.

The Greek translation here is unexpected. Rather than the פְּנוּאֵל (Penuel) of the MT being paralleled with Φανουηλ, as in the other occasions the place is mentioned, we have Εἶδος θεου (‘The-visible-form-of-God’). If one were to expect a literal rendering of the place name, then προσωπον θεοῦ (‘face of God’ - as in Genesis 33:10 and Psalm 42:2) would be the likeliest phrase, especially since Jacob sees “θεὸν πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον”. The Targumim preserve Penuel and so what we have is a translation peculiar to the Greek.

The implications of this translation are that the mysterious figure with which Jacob wrestles is the “form of God”. Braumann writes of εἶδος:

> The word is used in Plato for the Forms or Ideas which are the existing realities behind

> our world (Phaedo, 75, 102; Rep., 6, 508-11; cf. 7, 514 f.). The modern distinction between the external and the internal, the visible and the invisible, the husk and the kernel, and between outward form and essential content is inappropriate and foreign to this aspect of Gk. thought. Although Aristotle distinguished between eidos, morphē and hylē (matter), he was not thinking of two different materials. The eidos was the expression of the essence in visible form.[877]

The Pentateuch contains two further references to εἶδος which are of interest. The first occurs at Exodus 24:17:

> Now the appearance (εἶδος) of the Lord's glory was like a flaming fire on the top of the mountain before the sons of Israel.

This passage is of significance for the fourth Gospel's theme of glory, which will be discussed below. For now, it is worth noting that this glory is manifest in a similar manner to the figure who wrestles with Jacob. Of more interest to John 5 is Numbers 12:8:

> Mouth to mouth I will speak to him, in visible form (ἐν εἴδει) and not through riddles. And he has seen the glory of the Lord.

This passage refers back to the theophany before Moses and forms part of the defence made of Moses during the dispute with Aaron and Miriam. In the remainder of the Greek Old Testament, "ἐν εἴδει καὶ οὐ δι᾽ αἰνιγμάτων" does not appear as a phrase and would not seem to be idiomatic, rather a reference to the passage in Exodus quoted above. The passage underlines the uniqueness of Moses as a prophet ("If there is a prophet of you for the Lord, in a vision I will be known to him, and in sleep I will speak to him. Not so my attendant Moyses", vv. 6-7). The contrast is between visionary revelations made to other prophets, and the physical appearance to Moses. He is *sui generis*.

Returning to John it would appear that there is a conflation of the Sinai event with its more cautious ὁμοίωμα in Deuteronomy[878] and the εἶδος tradition elsewhere in the Pentateuch. There are a number of results from this.

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877. NIDNTT, Vo1. 1, p703f.

878. cf Deuteronomy 4:12 and 15 (where the Israelites are enjoined not to make any idols of forms as no form was seen at Sinai).

Firstly, and significantly, John has provided a hypostasization for the Sinai theophany. Whereas in Deuteronomy the Voice acts as a formless theophany, within John the theophany has a visible 'form' too.[879] This may well be a hypostasization of the Voice of God, especially in light of John 8:56 discussed below, and allows this notion to be added to the notions of Word, Wisdom and Torah as discussed in the prologue. Thus, John has a full hand of intertestamental figures at his disposal all of which have been identified with Christ. It would seem to be John's intention to identify the various intermediatory figures of the intertestamental literature, and the Greek Jewish Scriptures, with Christ. This has the effect of forming a strong continuity with the narrative arc of the Jewish scriptures, and in particular the Law.

Secondly, some did receive the Law. Moses is described as speaking with God who is "in visible form " (Numbers 12:8). Abraham too meets with the Voice of God in a similar manner in John 8:56 (see below). Not only this but Moses also saw the glory of the Lord, which would seem to the "εἶδος τῆς δόξης" which appeared atop Sinai in Exodus 24:17. It is not inconceivable that this theophany was also added to John's hand, especially when glory plays an important role within the developing theme of the Gospel.

Finally, and in passing, the conjunction of voice, form and word noted above serves to encompass the complete revelation through the Jewish scriptures, be it via Law, prophets (to whom the "word of the LORD" came), or in the Wisdom literature in which the activity of the 'attributes' is introduced.

The result of all of this is that Jesus is more than the "hermeneutical key"[880] to the scriptures, but is the embodiment of all that they point to and relate. In that sense he can be viewed as the λογος in the sense of the philosophers. Brodie suggests that the "text tells rather of what happens when God's testimony is absent",[881] but the

879. Borgen comments: "Since John vi.46 declares that there is no vision of God apart from the Son, then it is even probable that God's 'form' appearing at Mt Sinai, v.37, is identified with the Son of God". Borgen, 1976, p72.
880. Lincoln, 2005, p207.
881. Brodie, 1993, p253.

testimony is not absent from the text. It is there in the person of Christ, both as that person is present during the incarnation and also within the giving of the Law. What is absent is not the testimony but the reception of that testimony. To return to the Prologue, what we have here is an example of the phenomenon outlined in verse five: "καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν". The light has shone, both in the incarnate Christ and in the Law, but the darkness has not comprehended it.

It is with this in mind that 5:46-47 is best read:

> If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?

In the context of the passage, it would seem that what is in view are Moses' writings concerning the Sinai theophany (the form and voice). Moses writes about Christ not only in the phenomena he relates, but also because Christ is the embodiment of all that he received. As the Gospel progresses there is an unfolding of the narrative arc set forth in the Prologue - the Word comes to his own, but only a few receive him. That Moses is one such is clear, but it is also true of Abraham as can be seen from a later debate with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

b) The Word and the Patriarch - John 8:56[882]

This passage forms part of a larger section which highlights the discord between Jesus and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. What is commonly called the Tabernacles Discourse comprises chapters seven and eight, and the passage comes at the end of that section. Cory has argued that the Tabernacles Discourse is best understood against the

882. There is some debate as to whether the "I am" of verse 58 can be viewed as a reference to the divine name. There is difficulty in this view since the Greek at Exodus 3:14 is εγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν, rather that the εγώ εἰμι of John 8:58. It could be, of course, that John is drawing on the Hebrew but that is speculative. To take an example of recent debate on this issue, Bauckham has suggested that a better target is Deuteronomy 32:39 ("Behold, I, even I am he; there is no god besides me") which he says is a verse understood at the time as "an eschatological prophecy of the salvation that God would achieve...". Also, he sees links to the phrase as it is used in deutero-Isaiah to denote "divine self-declaration". cf Bauckham, 2005, pp157ff. However, such an argument falls outside the scope of this study which is not seeking to consider statements of identity, but rather the role of theophany in portraying such an identity.

background of a wisdom tale such as can be found in, amongst other places, the Joseph cycle, Daniel 3 and 2 Maccabees 7.[883] The twist here, though, is that Wisdom personified is the hero rather than a wise person.

The correlation between Christ and Wisdom within the passage is strong. A few examples will serve to illustrate the point.[884] Jesus states: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12. The radiant Wisdom is similarly a theme of Wisdom literature:

> Wisdom 7:10, 26, 29
> [10]I loved her more than health and beauty,
> and I chose to have her rather than light,
> because her radiance never ceases.
> ...
> [26]For she is a reflection of eternal light,
> a spotless mirror of the working of God,
> and an image of his goodness.
> ...
> [29]She is more beautiful than the sun,
> and excels every constellation of the stars.
> Compared with the light she is found to be superior,

Jesus was also, like Wisdom, with God at the beginning (John 8:28, 43. Cf. Proverbs 8:22-23; Sirach 24:9, Wisdom 6:22; 9:10).

A further feature of the Discourse, especially in light of the Prologue, is the theme of where Wisdom may be found.[885] Within Wisdom literature this theme is a prominent one:

> Job 28:12
> But where shall wisdom be found?
> And where is the place of understanding?
>
> Baruch 3:14-15
> [14]Learn where there is wisdom,
> where there is strength,
> where there is understanding,
> so that you may at the same time discern

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883. Cory, 1997. Much of the material on the Wisdom tale background to the Discourse is indebted to her.
884. For more see Cory, 1997, pp100ff.
885. For more on this see Cory, 1997.

where there is length of days, and life,
where there is light for the eyes, and peace.
[15]Who has found her place?
And who has entered her storehouses?

Ecclesiastes 7:25
I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know that wickedness is folly and that foolishness is madness.

Wisdom 6:12
Wisdom is radiant and unfading,
and she is easily discerned by those who love her,
and is found by those who seek her.

Sirach 1:3
The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth,
the abyss, and wisdom—who can search them out?

It is against this background that John 7:25-29 should be set:

[25]Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? [26]And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? [27]Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." [28]Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. [29]I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me."

Where is Jesus from? Like Wisdom, he is from the Father from the beginning and has come from him in the manner prayed for by Solomon:

Wisdom 9:9-10
[9]With you is wisdom, she who knows your works
and was present when you made the world;
she understands what is pleasing in your sight
and what is right according to your commandments.
[10]Send her forth from the holy heavens,
and from the throne of your glory send her,
that she may labor at my side,
and that I may learn what is pleasing to you.

This reliance upon Wisdom imagery for this section is, of course, a development of the Wisdom material within the Prologue. In fact, one might view it as an expansion of 1:10f:

John 1:10-13
[10]He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. [11]He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. [12]But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, [13]who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of

the will of man, but of God.

Of course, it could be argued that the Tabernacles Discourse serves to undermine the assertion that these verses from the Prologue describe a pre-incarnate activity of the Word. Better, the argument goes, to understand these verses as referring to the ministry of Jesus as described in the Gospel. Arguments countering this view have been given above, but this passage does also serve to bolster the argument that what is in view in the Prologue is the pre-incarnate Word. The echoes of the Wisdom Tale within the Discourse would act in a similar manner to the narrative investigated within the prologue whereby Wisdom seeks a home, but finds none. As with John 5 above, this passage would be an explication of John 1:11-12.

The climax of the discourse occurs at the end of Chapter 8 where Jesus states:

> [56]"Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad." [57]Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" [58]Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." [59]So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

The response to Jesus' words demonstrates that they were taken to mean that Jesus was alive at the time of Abraham[886] and the tenses used certainly indicate that:[887] καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη ('he saw it and was glad'). There is a long history of this passage being viewed as referring to an event in Abraham's life,[888] or that what is being referred to is the tradition that Abraham was given a glimpse into the future.[889] Other possibilities suggested are that Abraham is, from a heavenly vantage point, viewing Jesus' ministry. In support of this, the story of Lazarus and Dives is cited.[890] Sadananda suggests that the joy is that experienced by the prospect of the birth of Isaac and the concomitant covenantal implications.[891]

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886. Blomberg, 2001, p149, Beasley-Murray, 1999, p139.
887. Lincoln, 2005, p276.
888. "Up to the time of Maldonatus (16th century) exegetes were almost unanimous in assuming that this referred to a vision that took place during Abraham's life". Brown, 1971, p358.
889. cf Barrett, 1978, pp351ff. Blomberg, 2001, pp148ff.
890. Lindars, 1972, p335. Haenchen et al., 1984, p371.
891. Sadananda, 2004, pp112ff.

Abraham, important figure as he is, was the subject of much apocalyptic discussion[892] as these examples show:

> [13]And when they were committing iniquity in your sight, you chose for yourself one of them, whose name was Abraham; [14]you loved him, and to him alone you revealed the end of the times, secretly by night. 2 Esdras 3:13-14

> [1]And the Lord said unto me: 'This city shall be delivered up for a time, And the people shall be chastened during a time, And the world will not be given over to oblivion. [2][Dost thou think that this is that city of which I said: "On the palms of My hands have I graven thee"? [3]This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with Me, that which was prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed it to Adam before he sinned, but when he transgressed the commandment it was removed from him, as also Paradise. [4]*And after these things I showed it to My servant Abraham by night among the portions of the victims*.
>
> 2 Baruch 4:1-4

On Genesis 15:12, Philo writes of Abraham:

> A certain divine excess was suddenly rendered calm to the man endued with virtue; for the trance, or ecstacy as the word itself evidently points out, is nothing else than a departure of the mind wandering beyond itself. But the class of prophets loves to be subject to such influences; for when it is divining, and when the intellect is inspired with divine things, it no longer exists in itself, since it receives the divine spirit within and permits it to dwell with itself; or rather, as he himself has expressed it, as spirit falls upon him; since it does not come slowly over him, but rushes down upon him suddenly. Moreover, that which he has added afterwards applies admirably, that a great horror of darkness fell upon him. For all these things are ecstacies of the mind; for he also who is in a state of alarm is not in himself; but darkness is a hindrance to his sight; and in proportion as the horror is greater, so also do his powers of seeing and understanding become more obscured. And this is not said without reason: but as an indication of the evident knowledge of prophecy by which oracles and laws are given from God."[893]

One might also add to these examples the Apocalypse of Abraham and the Testament of Abraham. Given examples such as these it is tempting to have this vision of Abraham in mind such that what Abraham sees a glimpse of the future ministry of Jesus. Certainly Ignatius viewed it in that manner:

> If, then, those who were conversant with the ancient Scriptures came to newness of hope, expecting the coming of Christ, as the Lord teaches us when He says, "If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me;" and again, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad; for before Abraham was, I am;" how shall we be able to live without Him? The prophets were

892. See also the brief comment in Lincoln, 2005, p276.

893. *Q.G.* 3.9.

> His servants, and foresaw Him by the Spirit, and waited for Him as their Teacher, and expected Him as their Lord and Saviour, saying, "He will come and save us."[894]

Against this background, it would be possible to interpret the reaction "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" as being somewhat ironic, but Jesus' answer does not treat it as such (unless we are to enter the realms of irony within irony). His response is a strictly chronological one and its import would be rendered void if he were simply referring to a vision of an, as then, future event. The non-ironical nature of the discussion is underlined by the attempt to stone Jesus at the end of the discourse. As Ridderbos comments, "[I]t is improbable because in what follows the focus is on Jesus' contemporaneity with the *historical* Abraham, not on that of the *heavenly* Abraham with the historical Jesus".[895]

A further possible background has been posited by Ashton who draws attention to the Apocalypse of Abraham. He does not seek to suggest a direct dependence, but rather that the two passages breathe the same apocalyptic air and are roughly contemporaneous.[896] In particular, Ashton considers chapters 9 and 10 which introduce the figure of Yaoel, Abraham's heavenly guide.[897] This figure has a role which is similar to that of Jesus as one sent by God and having the authority of God's name.[898]

Ashton argues that the writer is here "influenced by the idea of a revealer-figure sent by God and endowed by the authority of his name".[899] This may well be true, and the arguments are strong, but there are other influences at work within this verse that are peculiarly Johannine and yet have their links to the Apocalyptic landscape evinced in the Apocalypse of Abraham. The Apocalypse draws on Genesis and Ezekiel[900] for much of its imagery and the passage cited by Ashton has Genesis 15 as its

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894. *Ign. Magn.* 10
895. Ridderbos, 1997, p321.
896. Ashton, 1991, pp142ff.
897. See also McGrath, 2001, pp111ff.
898. Ashton, 1991, p143.
899. Ashton, 1991, p144.
900. Charlesworth, 1983, p685.

inspiration[901] as can be seen from the excerpts below:

> Go, take me a young heifer of three years, and a she-goat of three years, and a ram of three years, a turtledove and a pigeon, and bring me a pure sacrifice. And in this sacrifice I will lay before you the ages to come, and make known to you what is reserved, and you shall see great things which you have not hitherto seen: *Apoc. Ab. 9*

> And he said to him, "Take for me a heifer three years old and a female goat three years old and a ram three years old and a turtledove and a dove." *Genesis 15:9 (LXX)*

Genesis 15 is a notable passage not only for the covenantal implications it contains, but also for its strange imagery in 15:1-6 (LXX):

> [1]Now after these matters the Lord's word came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram; I am shielding you; your reward shall be very great." [2]But Abram was saying, "O Master, what will you give me? And I, I am going away childless; as for the son of Masek, my female homebred, he is Damascus Eliezer." [3]And Abram said, "Since you have given me no offspring, my male homebred will be my heir." [4]And immediately a divine voice came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who shall come out of you, he shall be your heir." [5]Then he brought him outside and said to him, "Look up to heaven, and number the stars, if you will be able to count them." And he said, "So shall your offspring be." [6]And Abram believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

There are a number of factors which render this passage unusual. First, the 'word of the LORD' is portrayed in a markedly different manner to the more usual formulations employed when the prophets receive a word. Here the word comes in a vision, which suggests not only an auditory experience, but a visual one too. Then, in verse five, the Word "brought [Abram] outside" and showed him the stars. The fluidity of language with LORD, God and Word is not unusual, but the anthropomorphism of this verse is. Either we have the Word taking Abram outside, which would suggest a hypostasized Word or the LORD himself takes Abram outside. Whichever one may speculate, there is no change of subject in the remainder of the passage during which the pieces of the covenant sacrifice are called for, arranged and passed between.

In the Apocalypse of Abraham this hypostasization of the transcendent God is dealt with by means of Yaoel, whose name would appear to combine Yahweh and El. In

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901. Charlesworth, 1983, p685.

fact, in chapter seventeen Yaoel is the name given to God.[902] Yaoel's role within the Apocalypse could easily be seen to derive from the vagueness surrounding the figure who visits Abraham in Genesis fifteen and it is no surprise to see the imagery of Ezekiel's vision - another curiously anthropomorphic passage - being pressed into service too. It is precisely these kinds of passages, especially theophanic ones, which proved to be fertile soil from which the apocalyptic springs. It is also these passages which stretch the notion of transcendent monotheism.

Given the emphasis in the prologue of the pre-incarnate activity of the Word, John 8:57 fits naturally into the tableau of Genesis 15:1f.[903] Genesis 15:6 in the Targumim adds weight to this view:

> Then he believed in the Word of the Lord, and he reckoned it to him for merit. (Targum Jonathan)
>
> Then Abram believed in the name of the Word of the Lord, and it was reckoned to him for merit. (Targum Onqelos)

However, it should be noted that the Greek differs from the Hebrew and Aramaic at this point, having, from verse 4:

> And immediately a divine voice came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who shall come out of you, he shall be your heir." Then he brought him outside and said to him, "Look up to heaven, and number the stars, if you will be able to count them." And he said, "So shall your offspring be." And Abram believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.[904]

Thus it is the Voice, and not the Word, who is active within the Greek text, yet this would not necessitate a non-hypostatic reading. As has been discussed above a tradition of a hypostasized Voice can be found within the Jewish Scriptures, and it could be argued that the Greek Scriptures here preserve that tradition. It really would not be too difficult to conceive of a tradition, known within Judaism within Palestine, of a hypostasized figure springing from Genesis 15. Moreover, as has been seen,

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902. Ashton, 1991, p143.

903. Boyarin, 2001a, p275.

904. καὶ εὐθὺς φωνὴ κυρίου ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγων οὐ κληρονομήσει σε οὗτος ἀλλ᾽ ὃς ἐξελεύσεται ἐκ σοῦ οὗτος κληρονομήσει σε ἐξήγαγεν δὲ αὐτὸν ἔξω καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἀνάβλεψον δὴ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἀρίθμησον τοὺς ἀστέρας εἰ δυνήσῃ ἐξαριθμῆσαι αὐτους καὶ εἶπεν οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Αβραμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

John has already found in the Voice a hypostatisation at the heart of the Sinai theophany.

From this context the most natural reading of the discourse in John 8 is to see it as an example of the activity of the pre-existent Logos witnessed to in the Prologue (1:10-13). The passage in Genesis is a foundational one for the nascent Christianity as can be seen from its place within Paul's argument in Romans 4 and it would be natural, given the oddness of the language of the passage, to see Christ behind the hypostasization of the Word/Voice. After all it is Abraham's belief in God, as mediated by this figure, which is credited to him as righteousness. If this figure is then to be identified with Christ, the Old Covenant is capable of a high Christological interpretation and Jesus can be seen to have a close involvement with the patriarchs, an involvement which would be highly significant given the desire of the early Christians to emphasize their continuity with their Jewish heritage. After all, the Christological reinterpretation of the scriptures is a key task for the early church.

This would also explain the language employed within John 8:56: "Αβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἠγαλλιάσατο ἵνα ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμήν, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη" ('Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad'). Ἀγαλλιάω has connotations of worship[905] as can be seen from its use within the Greek scriptures, especially in the Psalms.[906] There is much debate concerning the event in view in 8:56 as there appears to be no clear referent within the Pentateuch.[907] This has led to the speculation noted above about what precisely Abraham saw and led, for instance, Bultmann, Lindars and Haenchen to see this as an act of Abraham from the vantage point of heaven "after the advent of Jesus in the heavenly Paradise where Abraham empathizes with the fortunes of his people on

905. Ridderbos, 1997, p320. He cites Bultmann in TDNT I, pp19ff.
906. 2 Sam 1:20; 1 Chr 16:31; Tob 13:9, 15; 3 Macc 2:17; Ps 2:11; 5:12; 9:3, 15; 12:5-6; 13:7; 15:9; 18:6; 19:6; 20:2; 30:8; 31:11-32:1; 34:9, 27; 39:17; 47:12; 50:10, 16; 52:7; 58:17; 59:8; 62:8; 66:5; 67:4-5; 69:5; 70:23; 74:10; 80:2; 83:3; 88:13, 17; 89:14; 91:5; 94:1; 95:11-12; 96:1, 8; 97:4, 8; 117:24; 118:162; 131:9, 16; 144:7; 149:2, 5; Pr Man 4:18; 9:47; Song 1:4; Sir 30:3; Hab 3:18; Isa 12:6; 25:9; 29:19; 35:1-2; 41:16; 49:13; 61:10; 65:14, 19; Jer 30:20; Lam 2:19
907. Ridderbos, 1997, p321.

earth".[908] Yet, as has already been stated, this view does not reconcile with the way in which the debate unfolds.

An example of a Pentateuchal target for Christ's words can be found in Brodie who has argued that what is in view is the birth of Isaac.[909] In coming to this view he considers the 'double joy' of 8:56 ("your ancestor Abraham rejoiced...he saw it and was glad") and compares it to the 'overwhelming laughter' at the announcement of Sarah's pregnancy in Genesis 17:17 (cf 18:12), and the joy at the birth in Genesis 21:6. He also points out loose linguistic parallels and then, drawing on Galatians 3:16, goes on to suggest that Isaac is a type of Christ such that "to have rejoiced over Isaac is to have rejoiced over Christ".[910] Moreover, he continues, Isaac is a type of the resurrection since he was born to two who were deemed dead and he, himself, was saved from sacrifice and, hence, brought back from the dead.

Whilst ingenious, it is clear from the text that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι did not grasp this form of argument. Also, in answering them, Jesus does not mention Isaac but simply asserts his pre-existence of Abraham. Rather than seeing the debate as one of a typological foreshadowing of the resurrection, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι seek to stone Jesus. The questioning of Jesus as regards his age is not, as Brodie suggests, a "surprising twist"[911] but would be the logical conclusion of the argument outlined above, that Christ met with Abraham in some manner.

If John 8:56 does, as has been argued, relate to Genesis 15 then the language would be appropriate given the setting of the giving of the Covenant in that chapter. Abram is one of those "who received him, who believed in his name" (John 1:12) since "he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Hence Abraham "ἠγαλλιάσατο" ('rejoiced').

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908. Ridderbos, 1997, p321. Ridderbos is here summarizing the view of the three mentioned above.
909. Brodie, 1993, pp334ff.
910. Brodie, 1993, p335.
911. Brodie, 1993, p336.

In the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, an infancy-narrative, the child Jesus addresses the Pharisees who have wondered at his words:

> 'Does this surprise you? I will tell you more. I have seen Abraham and spoken with him, and he has seen me.' ... 'I have been among you with the children, and you have not known me. I have spoken with you as with the wise and you have not understood my voice, for you are less than me, and of little faith.'[912]

Pseudo-Matthew may date as late as the eighth or ninth century, but draws on earlier sources.[913] Attached to it are letters which set out to show it was translated from Hebrew by Jerome,[914] but this provenance is disputed. Given its late date this passage does not give a reliable guide as to the early interpretation of John 8:56-7, or reflect the context of the thought represented in it. However, it does illustrate the rather ticklish nature of the verses.

c) The Word and Isaiah: John 12:41

> Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him

The immediate context of the Isaiah quotation has to do with the problem of unbelief amongst the Jews, a theme which is introduced in the prologue: "He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him" (1:11). This unbelief, it is implied, is neither a new phenomenon nor one which disqualifies Jesus' claims of Messiahship. Rather it is of a piece with the pattern set out in the Prologue, a point strengthened by John's use of light/dark imagery in verses 35-36.[915]

In chapter twelve, the motif of unbelief is illustrated by reference to two Old Testament passages. First of all, the Isaiah quotation is introduced with a phrase reminiscent of Deuteronomy 29:2-4, "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs (σημεῖα), and those great wonders. But

912. *Ps.-Mt.* 30. Elliott & James, 1993, p90.
913. Elliott & James, 1993, p86.
914. There is widespread scepticism as to Jerome's involvement.
915. Brown, 1971, p484.

to this day the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear".[916]

This section comes at the end of Jesus' public ministry and as such it forms an assessment of the response to the 'signs' performed during that ministry. That the bulk of the Jews failed to appreciate what they saw is simply of a piece with their history.[917]

The quote from Isaiah further bolsters this position. The "arm of the Lord" has been revealed, yet "He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn - and I would heal them". This, in turn, is followed by the claim that "Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him".

Since there is a strong insistence within the fourth Gospel that only the Son has seen the Father (1:18, 3:13, 5:37, 6:46), it is most natural to see the one seen as Christ, a stance taken by the great majority of commentators.[918] The significant question is therefore one of timescale: did Isaiah foresee some future activity of the incarnate Christ, or did he see the pre-incarnate Christ?

Whilst many commentators settle for the first of these two options, when viewing the Gospel in light of the Prologue it would be more natural to take the latter option. Just as Abraham saw Christ, and just as the form of Christ was present at Sinai, Isaiah too sees Christ. Christ is, to use the happy phrase of Skaursane, the appearing God.

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916. Brown, 1971, p485.
917. Ridderbos, 1997 , p444. It should be noted that Ridderbos does not subscribe to the view that the Prologue refers to the pre-existent activity of Christ, but that it refers to the unbelief evinced in the Gospel itself. Nonetheless, he does see the unbelief as part of the pattern of Israel.
918. e.g. Brown, 1971, p486f; Ridderbos, 1997, p444f. Williams notes this view is "widespread". Williams, 2005, pp111ff. She then goes on to suggest that Isaiah is having a vision of the future glory of the earthly Jesus, a view which would seem to ask too much of the text.

Further support for this position is garnered by John's use of the glory motif. Much has been written concerning possible sources of the Greek used by John in the latter half of this quotation, since it neither follows the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint (such as it has come down to us). A Targummic source is often posited[919] with the mention made of glory being seen as significant in this connection as the Targum translated 6:1 to show Isaiah seeing the "glory of the Lord" and in verse five he sees the "glory of the *shekinah* of the Lord".[920]

If Christ is viewed as being, in Johannine terms, the glory of the Father then the most natural interpretation of this passage is to understand Isaiah as seeing the glory of the Lord, i.e. Christ.[921] In other words this is no vision of a future reality, but, rather, that which appeared to Isaiah was none other than the pre-incarnate Christ.

However, there is a later Christian tradition that Isaiah *does* have a vision of the future which is particularly prominent in those parts of the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* which are widely held to be a later Christian interpolation. However one must be wary of anachronism here, especially as it has been cogently argued that the *Martyrdom* is a document which seeks to act as a corrective to an existing tradition[922] and is therefore somewhat polemical.

Given the narrative of the acceptance/rejection of the pre-incarnate Christ in the Prologue, and the other appearances in chapters five and eight which have been considered above, it would be most natural to read this passage as of a piece with them. Certainly, this reading is one which is later attested in Justin, Irenaeus and Pseudo-Cyprian.[923]

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919. e.g. Brown, 1971, pp486ff; Lincoln, 2005, p358.. Schnackenburg, 1968, however, sees the quotation as simply the product of the author, p415.
920. Brown, 1971, pp486ff. The translations are his. cf also Schnackenburg, 1968, pp416ff.
921. Ridderbos, 1997, p445. "...the Evangelist traces the glory of Christ back to its ultimate preexistent state and reduces the blinding of the people to its final seriousness..."
922. Hannah, 1999a. He comments: "his tradition stands out because it contrasts with the majority view - attested in the Fourth Gospel, Justin, Irenaeus, and Ps,-Cyprian - that the divine figure who appeared to Isaiah was the Logos rather than God himself", p99.
923. Hannah, 1999a, p84.

III. Conclusion: Theophany in John

It is clear that theophany plays a different role in John than it plays in Mark. Whereas Mark is employing a narrative approach to his Christological presentation of Christ, John's approach employs more of a "this is that" method.

So it is that in the Prologue Jesus is identified with the Word of God and is spoken of in language which also identifies him with Wisdom and Torah.[924] There is a conscious use of the tradition which has Wisdom seeking a home, only now a home is found. Christ is the form which was not seen at Sinai, and he dwells amongst us in the manner of the presence in the tabernacle. Indeed, no-one has seen the Father. It is the Son who is the visible form of the Father.

This identification of Christ with the theophanic appearances in the Old Testament continues in the remainder of the Gospel with Christ being identified with the one whom Isaiah saw in his great vision. That much is widely acknowledged amongst commentators. However, there is another aspect to John's theology which has not been considered within the secondary literature, that of the role of the Voice of God. In his consideration of the Sinai theophany in chapter 5, John has identified in the Voice a 'form' at the heart of the event. Thus Jesus can be identified with the very giving of the Law itself, and the Sinai theophany is given a figure at its centre. So it is that Christ is 're-imagined' into the text of the Genesis in a key covenantal moment. He is the form which was not seen on Sinai, when only the voice was heard. Although - ironically - the Jews who debated with him did not properly hear the voice in any case. Something adumbrated in the prologue.

Whilst there is an identification of Jesus with the theophanies of the Old Testament

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924. Reed, commenting on the apocryphal texts, writes: "What is developing here is quite simple: word (logos), wisdom (sophia), and law (nomos) are interchangeable and synonymous (in all fairness, any reader of the texts cannot speak of one without speaking of the other)". Reed, 2003, p719. In this, he acknowledges he is following Barrett, 1978 and Brown, 1971.

within the Gospel of John, it is important to note that there is a clear effort in the Prologue to ensure that this does not result in a docetic understanding of Christ. At the incarnation this theophanic presence is 'enfleshed' and so the person of Christ differs in degree and nature from the theophanies which precede him. However, that there is also a radical continuity is clear from not only the Prologue, but also the remainder of the Gospel.

This, alongside the passages discussed above concerning Abraham and the form at Sinai, serves to unfold a theme introduced in the Prologue whereby only a few "received him". By expounding this theme with reference to Sinai, Abraham and Isaiah, John has identified Christ with those theophanies encountered by the Patriarchs, at the giving of the Law and by the prophets.

9
Conclusions

Christianity does not arise from a vacuum. Inevitably it is shaped by a number of factors, some of which reflect its environment. Whilst the New Testament does not set out a fully developed Christology, there is a recurrent theme that any understanding of Christ which can be found within its pages will be "according to the scriptures". This understanding raises two questions: in what manner is it "according" (i.e. by what methodology); and what are the scriptures?

The methodology used by Gospel writers can fruitfully be viewed as a result of a textual community. Here we have a group of people who are seeking to re-understand and reinterpret a given text in light of a communal experience. In our case what is referred to is the Christ event. So it is that there is no attempt to understand Christianity as a new religion, but as a 'correct' understanding of Judaism. When Jesus meets with the two who are approaching Emmaus, he explains his significance with reference to the scriptures. Philip exegetes a passage from Isaiah for the Eunuch and so on. The methodology employed is one of re-interpretation.

As to what constitutes 'the scriptures', a challenge needs to be made to the hegemony of the Masoretic Text in the field of New Testament scholarship. It is the Greek form of those Scriptures which are of relevance here. The desire for a single fixed text is something left to a later date. Within Second Temple Judaism there is ample evidence to illustrate that there simply was not an agreed form. Moreover, the Greek scriptures were wider in their scope than the Hebrew ones, and they preserve a strand

of Second Temple Judaism which is lost if one simply adheres to the Masoretic Text or other, earlier Hebrew texts.

In addition, a greater place needs to be given to the traditions which grew in Second Temple Judaism. In another context, Segal has asserted that "[n]o doubt, Morton Smith is right to point out that Persian influence on Jewish culture has been generally underestimated because of its lack of textual evidence"[925]. As with fixed forms of text, a desire for documentary evidence reflects concerns of a later age.

However, even where textual evidences bear witness to traditions they are often downplayed. Pseudepigraphal, Apocryphal and, when handled with care, Targummic material can bear witness to traditions which are not clearly documented and these traditions form part of the religious air breathed by the nascent Christian communities. They are the raw material which the textual community use in forming their tradition.

With these two factors - methodology and meta-narrative - in mind, one can turn to the central question set out in the Gospels: who is Jesus?

I. Theophany and Christ

Mark and John both employ an understanding of theophany in their portrayal of Christ. For Mark, Jesus is portrayed as acting in the same manner as the theophanies of the Old Testament. When coupled with his use of the Isaian New Exodus, with its hope of a return of the LORD to Zion, we have Christ portrayed as the returning LORD who comes in the same manner as was witnessed in the Old Testament.

The Christological thrust is not one of categories, names and identities but one of actions and narrative. Jesus does things which only the LORD can do, so there must be an identification of nature or divinity. Mark does not seek to do any more than set

925. Segal, 1977, p19.

out the paradox of a human doing what only God can do, but the implications are clear. Here is the one who appeared in theophany, but now the appearance is to a greater extent and is somehow combined to the humanity which one sees die at the crucifixion. The fear of the women at the tomb serves to underscore the mysterious nature of all of this.

John is less coy. Within the Prologue there is an identification of Christ with the 'attributes' of God which had developed in the Theology of the Second Temple period where much work on the understandings of divine 'presence' had taken place. The presence of God is enfleshed in the person of Christ.

This presence is identified with the invisible Voice of the Sinai event, so that Christ is 'written in' to the very core of the covenant. To reject Christ is to reject this covenant. It is Christ who was met by Moses, Abraham and Isaiah. He is the theophany, but at the incarnation this theophanic presence is 'enfleshed' in a new way. Once more the LORD tabernacles with his people, but for John this tabernacling takes place in the person of Jesus.

This identification of Christ with the theophanies is something which is found within the writings of Justin Martyr, who is self consciously passing on the tradition of the apostles. This tradition is not merely oral but, as has been seen, is textual too. This notion is no fresh understanding of Justin but he relates a tradition extant within the early Gospel communities.

II. Theophany and Christ within New Testament Scholarship

As pointed out, the role of theophany in the portrayal of Christ in the Gospels is something which has received scant attention. Hurtado's comments on this notion, as noted above, illustrate this when he writes that this notion: "may well appear still more bizarre to many moderns"[926]. Herein lies something of the problem, since any reconstruction of New Testament Christology is ultimately an historical undertaking.

926. Hurtado, 2003, p574.

Conclusions may appear bizarre to those whose worldview is somewhat different, but this merely means the dangers of anachronism need to be paid greater heed. It is a shame that the disciplines of Patristics and New Testament Scholarship are so often divided as the former has much to say to the latter.

The understanding of Christ set out in this thesis helps in the reconstruction of what has become known as the 'parting of the ways' and it demonstrates the relationship of the nascent church to its Jewish context in the most central of its beliefs. What we have is a battle of interpretation, which results in the rejection of the Greek Scriptures by the Jewish community and its adherence to the Hebrew texts.

There is relevance, too, to those who seek to understand the use of the Old Testament in the New. The 'imagination' of the Textual Community described above serves to give some coherence to the often delicate echoes, intertextuality, allusions etc. The methodology proposed within the thesis helps to loosen the desire to see documentary identification alone and underlines the importance of the meta-narrative in the work of the New Testament communities.

A further contribution of the thesis is in the area of what is often called divine attributes, with the identification of the reification of the Voice of God in the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. This is something of a challenge to the portrayal of a strict monotheism which is often suggested.

III. Implications for Further Research

This thesis has limited itself to Mark and John, but the theme can be seen to be present in other parts of the New Testament too, not least Paul's writings where the events on the road to Damascus can be viewed in this light. Moreover, the combining of theophanic presence with the human person in the Incarnation can be a fruitful background to considerations of the soteriology to be found within the epistles.

The use of the Greek scriptures in preference to the Hebrew is an important factor in New Testament research. Quite what are the scriptures which are "God-breathed"? Here the Orthodox will prove a rich resource with their adherence to the Greek Scriptures, and research in this area is growing.

A final set of implications is in the field of the relationship between the nascent church and the Jewish community/ies. What is portrayed is a battle over the correct interpretation of a shared set of Scriptures which leads to the rejection of the Greek scriptures by the Jews in favour of the Hebrew Text. In places, it is suggested in this thesis that what comes down to us in the Masoretic Text may well have been edited *against* the Christians. Such is the irony of Jerome's project! Perhaps Augustine had a point:

> For my part, I would much rather that you would furnish us with a translation of the Greek version of the canonical Scriptures known as the work of the Seventy translators. For if your translation begins to be more generally read in many churches, it will be a grievous thing that, in the reading of Scripture, differences must arise between the Latin Churches and the Greek Churches.[927]

927. Augustine, Letter 71.

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